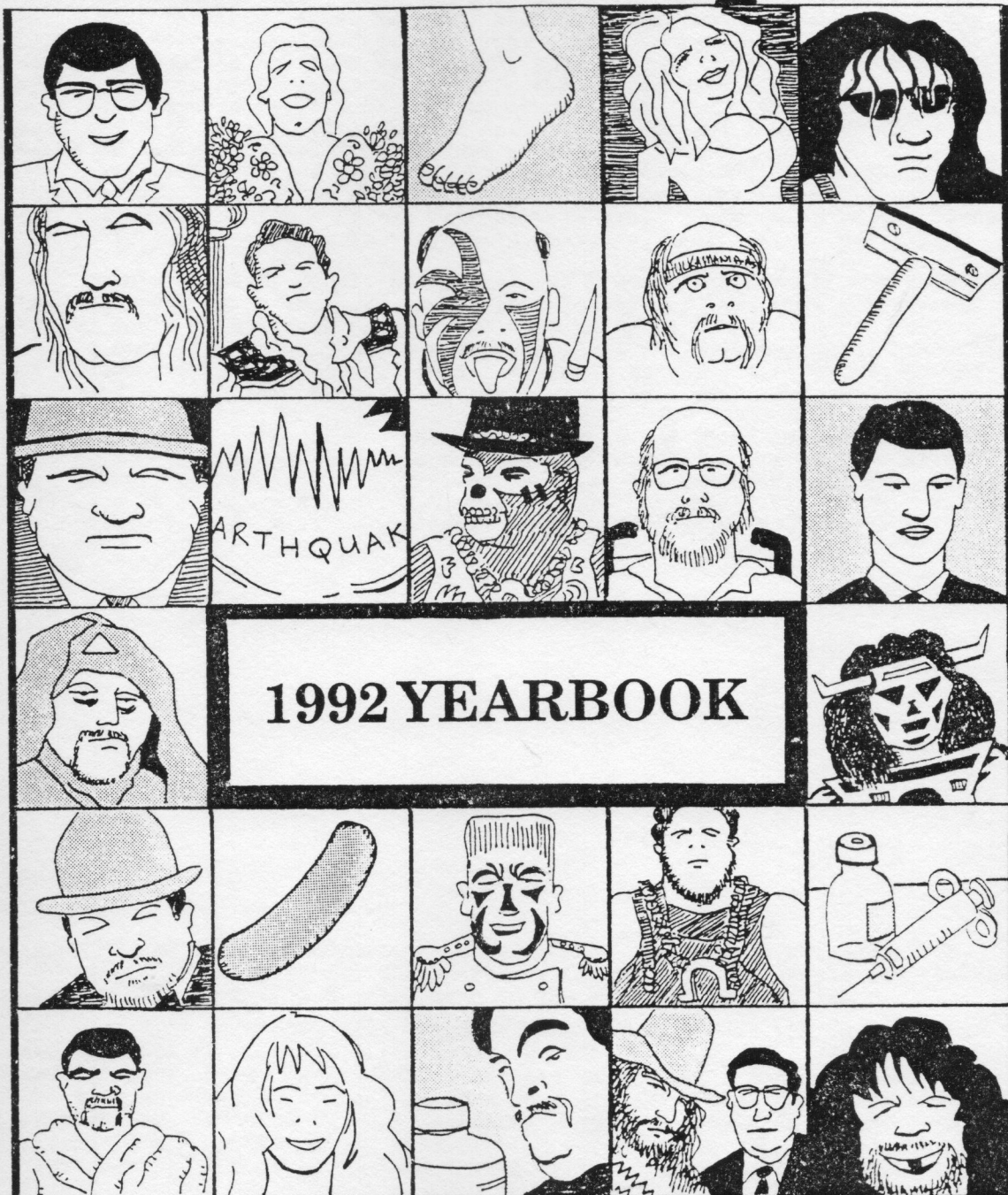


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ArenaReport



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INTRODUCTION

Well, here it is, the Arena Report 1992 Yearbook. It was hell putting this together, especially this last week with Christopher (my son) coming down with chicken pox 4 days before Christmas eliminating our Xmas day trip to Klonville. I've put as much variety in this project as I could think of what with all the different columnists, top ten lists, results, letters, your top live match picks, reader profiles, etc. I really think you'll enjoy this yearbook. And if not, I'd like to know how I can improve next year's so let me know.

Now it's time to acknowledge a few people so here I go. First and always foremost is my wife Cheryl. If I were her I think I would have divorced me for my schedule in the month of December. Let's see, I went to an ICWA show on the 3rd. My buddy from college (lives in Atlanta) came down the weekend of the 11th and we did an all sports weekend with the Orlando Magic vs. Phoenix on the 11th, went to Mansfield's IWF tapings at Universal on the day of the 12th, drove to Tampa that afternoon and caught a Tampa Bay Lightning hockey game vs. Edmonton that night. Stayed over in Tampa Sat. night and went to the Bucs vs. Falcons game Sunday. Then on the 18th I rang announced a CFWF show. The trips culminated with a trek to St. Pete with Jeff Bowdren for WCW the day after Christmas. Put that all together combined with lots of time working on the yearbook and I owe her about 3 weeks of uninterrupted time. I love ya babe!

Next of course I'd like to thank all the people who wrote columns for the yearbook. Your time and effort was very much appreciated. I enjoyed all the works and I'm sure the readers will too. Thanks also to the readers for contributing as well be it results, letters, profiles, or best live bouts.

Thanks to Dean, Caryl, and Sue at Pac & Copy Plus for all the help they've given me in the past year. It's because of them that this newsletter has a great track record of always being on time.

A final thank you goes to all you readers who have supported "AR" this past year. Of course without you, I wouldn't be doing this sheet, and if I didn't publish this newsletter, there would be a void that would be missed.

And just a reminder for those that forget and those seeing this for the first time, Arena Report is published bi-weekly at the cost of \$1.00 per issue. All results, letters, comments on the yearbook, and subscriptions may be sent to Arena Report, P.O. Box 952547, Lake Mary, FL 32795. The next issue of "AR" will be published on 1/18/93. Enjoy the yearbook.

ABOUT THE COVER: An absolute huge mega thank you to John Hitchcock for designing the cover for the yearbook. It depicts the people and "things" that have made 1992 a wacky year in the world of pro wrestling.

Top row, left to right: Jim Cornette, Ric Flair, a foot (in reference to Mel Phillips of course), Missy Hyatt, Bret Hart. 2nd Row: Jake Roberts, Buddy Rogers, Hawk, Hulk Hogan, a squeegie (in reference to Sid's weapon he chose to go after Brian Pillman in a bar) 3rd Row: Bill Watts, Earthquake, Papa Shango, Ron Wright, Vince McMahon. 4th Row: Kevin Sullivan, Jushin Liger. 5th Row: Mr. Fuji, a weenie (in reference to Erik Watts), Sting, Haystacks Calhoun, a needle and syringe (in reference to the steroid scandals) 6th Row: Rick Rude, Madusa, Paul Bearer, Dutch Mantell & Bob Caudle, Undertaker

RON LEMIEUX'S 1992 WRESTLING AWARDS

As in past years my picks are based on the U.S. wrestling seen since not everyone has access to tapes from other parts of the world. Soooo here we go.

Wrestler of The Year: SHAWN MICHAELS The future of wrestling, bottom line. Although the Rockers were a sensational tag team, Michaels needed to get out on his own to show his true stuff. Michaels has that missing ingrediant that Marty Jannetty lacks or Marty could be as good. Ric Flair comes in a very close second.

Best Babyface: STING Hogan would've taken this category again if he worked for the better part of the year. Take Hulk out of it and Sting is the next most over face in the country. Steiner Brothers come in second.

Best Heel: RIC FLAIR I would have loved to have gone with Jake Roberts but all I keep remembering is the fans standing and cheering when he attacked Sting. Flair is the consummate heel. Knows how to play the game.

Feud Of The Year: MOONDOGS VS. LAWLER & JARRETT This one came to mind immediatly. If you love brawling (and I do) this was the feud to see. This is what made Memphis TV in 1992. Second goes to the Heavenly Bodies vs. Rock & Roll Express. And we all wrote Ricky and Robert off long ago. Shows how much we know!

Tag Team Of The Year: THE MOONDOGS Every match they had was full of excitement. No dull moments or restholds when these sick pups were in the ring. Second goes to Heavenly Bodies which is a surprise considering I've never been a fan of Stan Lane.

Most Improved: TATANKA There were times last year when Chris Chavis would come on Prime Time that I'd take a fridge break. Not anymore. (Unless it's against a Damian Demento.) Getting to deserve his push.

Most Unimproved: RANDY SAVAGE A lock in my book. I can't believe how Randy has fallen. He's now just going through the motions unless he has a Ric Flair to carry him. Jake Roberts gets second. Granted his last stint in Titan wasn't that hot but he took a turn for the absolute worst when he hit WCW this year.

Best On Interviews: JAKE ROBERTS If the guy could have had a good work-rate he would have been wrestler of the year. No one gave better heel interviews than Jake. He was the only credible thing in that stupid "Spin The Wheel" promo. Second goes to Paul E. Dangerously. Fun to listen for some shoot comments amid his wild diatribes.

Most Overrated Wrestler: BRIAN LEE Always a toughie because over-rated in whose eyes? I have to disagree with Jim Cornette on making this guy my first SMW champ. The guy is colorless and can't do an interview to save his life. But then again, what SMW babyface can?

Most Underrated Wrestler: DIRTY WHITE BOY. Tony Anthony once again this year worked his butt off to get over in Smoky Mountain. Of course it didn't hurt to have Ron Wright as his manager. Anthony has always been a consistant performer. Second goes to Jeff Jarrett who really works a great match but since he's another case of "Daddy's the Promoter", he gets overlooked.

Best Promotion: SMOKY MOUNTAIN WRESTLING Should be on everyones top of the list. Good wrestling action and like the title says, wrestling the way it use to be. WWF could be on top next year depending on what they do with all their new talent and storylines.

Best Brawler: THE MOONDOGS Enough has been said. If you haven't seen any Memphis tapes of these guys, get your hands on some. Second goes to the Cacti Man, Cactus Jack.

Best Television Show: SMOKY MOUNTAIN WRESTLING Good angles, good wrestling, and not too much given away on TV. 2nd goes to WCW Saturday Night.

Match Of The Year: WRESTLE WAR The Dangerous Alliance vs. Nikita, Sting, Windham, Rhodes, and Steamboat was all out excitement. Sitting in the front row didn't hurt either.. Second goes to the Falls Count Anywhere bout that Cactus and Sting had in Jacksonville in November.

Rookie Of The Year: DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE Does he even count? I can't think of anyone else except you know who and I'd rather cancel the award than vote for him.

Manager Of The Year: Paul E. DANGEROUSLY Tremendous work throughout the year. Still find it inconceivable that Watts wants rid of him. The guy is a true talent. So what if he'll go to the WWF and be a star. Watts still has Harley Race. Second goes to Ron Wright.

Best Television Announcer: JIM ROSS Still the standard bearer for modern day announcers. Second once again goes to Tony Schiavone.

Worst Television Announcer: ANYONE THAT ANNOUNCES GLOBAL WRESTLING FEDERATION (Post Craig Johnson & Scott Hudson of course) Every time I get up the nerve to put that show on, it's off again in two minutes because the announcers insult the intelligence of an ape with the banter they have.

Top Ten Replacements for Dan Quayle

by Butch Bigelow

10. Bobby "the Brain" Heenan - The Congressional Post Office scandal, the Senate Banking scandal, the Savings and Loan scandal, etc... at least we'd know where 80% of the money went.

9. Razor Ramon - All illegal aliens would be required to pay a \$10,000.00 border entry fee which Razor would split with George while servicing Barbara to keep her mouth shut about it. Would also hold the toothpick concession at the congressional lunchroom.

8. Missy Hyatt - The only woman who could out whine both Hillary AND Tipper.

7. Harley Race - An asset for stealing the Southern vote since he looks so much like Col. Sanders these days.

6. Repo Man - The only man sneaky enough to successfully pull off a Watergate-like scam without leaving his fingerprints on the doorknob. Has already repossessed Quayle's roller blades.

5. Johnny B. Badd or P.N. News - Could attract either the Black vote or the White vote depending on what neighborhood they were in at the moment.

4. Colonel DeBeers - Could attract the highly coveted David Duke and Pat Buchanan vote.

3. Crush - The mere mention of his name would cause the Arab fanatics to reconsider any thoughts of aggression.

2. Papa Shango - Isn't it obvious? Could apply the policy of "Voodoo Economics" until Clinton's eyes bleed green pus.

1. Vince McMahon - Can already look straight into the camera and lie through his teeth with the best of them. A natural born politician.

1992: IS IT OVER YET?

Scott Hudson

JANUARY: The seeds were planted in the "Titangate" scandals..George Zahorian was sentenced..Mike Rotunda, Jerry Saggs, and Brian Nobbs were involved in a road side knife fight..Jim Herd resigned as president of WCW..Kip Frey took his place and hired Jesse Ventura..Ric Flair won the WWF Title going 59:00 in a very well received "Royal Rumble" PPV..Joel Goodhart declared bankruptcy and the world yawned..The "Clash of the Champions" from Topeka aired..Marty Janetty was arrested in Tampa..Wilbur Snyder and Ralph Pulley died.

FEBRUARY: The Sheik vs. Bobo Brazil headlined Columbus, Ohio.."Titangate" was profiled on "20/20" as the scandal grew..The State of Florida Legislature voted down a bill to regulate professional wrestling..Law enforcement authorities raided the WWF's dressing room in St. Louis..Kerry Von Erich was arrested in Dallas..WSB-TV in Atlanta investigated complaints of racism within WCW raised by "you-know-who"..The LPWA put on very good PPV as its final hurrah..Tojo Yamamoto, Buzz Sawyer, and Curtis Towe died.

MARCH: Pat Patterson and Terry Garvin "resigned" from the front office of Titan Sports..WCW's "Superbrawl" PPV was a very popular show..Jeff Gaylord & Eddie Gilbert engaged in a GWF dressing room brawl..Murray Hodgson sued Titan Sports and the scandal widened..Terry Gordy & Steve Williams debuted for WCW..Jim Crockett, Jr. was fired from WCW.

APRIL: WCW changed the format of the long successful Saturday night show, opting for a more "NFL Live" appearance..Jack Petrick was let go from WCW and Bill Shaw was brought in.."Titangate" peaked in mainstream media coverage..WWF's "Wrestlemania" PPV met with lackluster reviews despite the return of The Ultimate Warrior.."WBF BodyStars", an embarrassment, debuted on the USA Network..Joe Pedicino was removed from all aspects of the GWF, surprising those who thought (incorrectly) that he was the GWF..Jim Cornett's Smoky Mountain Wrestling debuted..Corsica Joe & Jimmy Lennon died.

MAY: Paul E. Dangerously and Madusa re-enacted the Gaylord/Gilbert act of March..Sid "There is No" Justice was fired from the WWF..The International Olympic Committee voted to return the amateur status of professional wrestlers for the 1996 Summer Games (Van Hammer leapt for joy!)..The "Titangate" scandal went as quickly as it came (with apologies to Mel Phillips)..Lucha Libre's EMLL was split in half, providing Mexico with a new, third major wrestling promotion, the AAA..WCW's "WrestleWar" PPV was awesome live..FMW/WWA blew out Los Angeles with the independent show of this or any year in memory..SWS split into thirds..Fred Ward died.

JUNE: Don Owen retired thereby cementing the death of the old time territories as they once were..Randy Savage and Elizabeth separated (and later divorced. She's all yours, Prazak!)..The USWA vs. GWF angle, the best of the year, began in Memphis..The WBF PPV bombed big-time..Marty Janetty was sentenced to probation in Florida..Jim Ross broke the wrestling announcer's glass ceiling by landing a spot on the Atlanta Falcons radio broadcast team..Bill Watts came down from the mountaintop with the ten commandments of WCW..Lex Luger (remember him?) was injured in a motorcycle accident in Atlanta..WCW had artistic, if not financial, success with both the "Beach Blast" PPV and the Charleston, South Carolina, "Clash of the Champions"..Masami Soronaka & Fred Tatano died..and, goddamnit, Buddy Rogers died, too.

JULY: Bob Backlund returned to the WWF..WCW's "Great American Bash" PPV sucked..Big Van Vader won the World Title in his fourth different promotion, posing the musical question "Which sucker will be fifth?"..Morale in the WCW dressing rooms did a nosedive..The WBF mercifully folded.."Penthouse" magazine, using the unfortunate cover story "Howard Stern Has A Very Small Penis", did a wrestling expose'..Missy Hyatt & Jason Hervey were involved in a bike accident (motorcycle, not bicycle..)..Stan Frazier & Danny McShane died.

AUGUST: Jake Roberts debuted for WCW..WVEU-TV in Atlanta pulled the plug on the 8 year old seven hour Saturday night wrestling block..Ron Simmons became the first Florida State linebacker from the 80's to win the WCW World Title (he was the first something else, too, but I forget what)..Pat Patterson "returned" to Titan Sports..Vince McMahon & Jerry Jarrett entered a gentleman's agreement (yeah, and you thought they'd never tear down the Berlin Wall, either!)..WWF's "Summerslam" PPV was as good as they have done..Erik Watts debuted for WCW.

SEPTEMBER: The Road Warriors, arguably wrestling's most successful tag team, broke up..WCW's "20th Anniversary Clash of the Champions" was, eh, OK..Scott Steiner won the TV Title, turned, turned back, and quit..Johnny Kakacek, Roy Shire, & Roy Heffernan died.

OCTOBER: Kerry Von Erich was sentenced to probation in Texas..Bret Hart won the WWF Title..Gino Brito was arrested in Canada..A heel clown, a heel clown!, debuted in the WWF..WCW's "Halloween Havoc" PPV was sandpoundingly bad..It was real bad.

NOVEMBER: WCW's "Clash of the Champions" from Macon was (guess) bad..Conversely, the WWF's "Survivor's Series" PPV was good..Quite good..Curt Hennig returned and turned..Freddie Miller died.

DECEMBER: Rick & Scott Steiner and Jerry Lawler debuted for the WWF (Yaaaaaaahhhhhhh!)..WCW's TV ratings and house show attendance appeared to have bottomed out and were increasing ever so slightly..SMW was surging..The United States Justice Department began to smell a Pat, or, rat..My love for wrestling almost died.

DAMN, I HOPE 1993 IS BETTER

TOP TEN WRESTLERS IN THE WORLD TODAY

BY DAVE MELTZER

In compiling this list of the top ten wrestlers in the world today, I tried to base it on consistent workrate. Rather than rating someone because they put together a few excellent matches during the year, sometimes on major shows, who may go through the motions during the rank-and-file house shows, the attempt is to put emphasis on guys who did the job night after night. I didn't include any women in this list, although Manami Toyota, Akira Hokuto and Kyoko Inoue would all have to be near the top if they were being considered.

1. KENTA KOBASHI: The most outstanding male wrestler in the world today. Barring injuries, he's a sure bet to become an all-time great. Kobashi was in more four-star matches this year than anyone else. More than anyone else involved in those matches, it was his work that made those matches as good as they were. At 6-2, 260, he does all the moves the lighter weight wrestlers do, has a nightly workrate beyond compare and his ring psychology for 1990s style ranks with anyone's. Kobashi is only 25 years old and because of how All Japan operates, is virtually guaranteed to be a main eventer for the next decade. Because he's already got the ability, and because he's going to be given the chance, he's a good bet to become the wrestler of the 1990s.

2. TOSHLAKI KAWADA: Comparable to Kobashi in most ways. Kawada right now is higher on the All Japan pecking order and his kicks and brawling are unequaled, plus he's got an amazing arsenal of moves and spots. Kawada's offensive repertoire is both realistic and convincing, ahead of even Kobashi's. For workrate and intensity, it's a dead heat between them. I'd rate Kobashi ahead on selling and maybe give him a slight edge on stamina, although Kawada has the edge in psychology. It's that close. Kawada is shorter and four years older and will also be a consistent main eventer for many years, although long-term Kobashi will surpass him.

3. JUSHIN LIGER: Liger had another incredible year. He was somewhat downplayed during parts of the year, but also went back and forth with the junior heavyweight belt in New Japan during most of it. Highlights were his match with Brian Pillman in Milwaukee, which in my opinion was the best singles match in the U.S. all year, and a tremendous series in Japan with El Samurai. Although Liger only headlined one major show for New Japan (4/30 Sumo Hall vs. Samurai), fans react to his matches as good as anyone's because they know a great match is coming. On the final night of the August NWA tournament in Sumo Hall, the announcement of Liger vs. Pegasus Kid before the show drew more crowd reaction than the Rick Rude vs. Masa Chono tournament final.

4. PEGASUS KID: The most underutilized wrestler in the world. New Japan has him typecast as a mid-card or lower card guy because in some ways the company still treats him like a young wrestler right out of camp, since he was trained in Japan. He's actually the best foreign worker the company has, and probably the most versatile wrestler in the world. He's the best foreigner at Lucha Libre style, the best foreigner at Japanese style and the best foreigner at European style. He's also just 25, so he should be one of the top ten in the world for years to come. He patterned his style after his childhood hero, the Dynamite Kid, who was one of the great workers of his era, but Pegasus Kid is far better than Dynamite ever was.

5. SHAWN MICHAELS: Best in the U.S. and legitimately deserving this place. Michaels has tremendous talent and incredible ability in U.S. style. Based on what he did in Japan, he doesn't have the complete style of versatility of the wrestlers named above him. He's also young, 27, so he could be a major star in the U.S. for many years to come as well, although since workrate often means little and politics account for so much more, that is far less a certainty than someone

like Kobashi or Kawada.

6. HIROSHI HASE: The best technical wrestler in the world today. Hase is more skilled at working than anyone in the business. Also by far the most unselfish booker of the era. Hase often keeps himself in the mid-card even though it is readily acknowledged he's the best worker in the company in order to set the example for everyone else about putting people over when the time is right to do so. Hase can carry just about anyone, a task he's often assigned. He doesn't do the spectacular acrobatics like Liger and falls behind Kobashi and Kawada in all-out intensity on a nightly basis, but he's more skilled than any of them.

7. TSUYOSHI KIKUCHI: The human punching bag. Kikuchi improved a lot over the past year, particularly in his offense. This guy is pro wrestling's No. 1 psychotic when it comes to taking punishment. What he allows to be done with himself is inhuman. Basically he's a Cactus Jack, but a lot smaller and a lot more skilled when it comes to wrestling. Unlike the rest of the guys, Kikuchi probably won't be on top forever. No way he can continue to take this kind of punishment and last. But he deserves to be here while he lasts because his work is right at the top.

8. RIC FLAIR: Flair is still the most consistent performer in the United States. He's also the most complete wrestler. He can be a bump machine. He can sell a hold. He can do holds and work on the mat. He can do high spots. He always gives it his all. No athlete is ever going to be as good when he's 43 years old as he was when he was 30 and Flair is only human. He's not the best wrestler in the world anymore. But he had a great year in the ring once again, in carrying and covering for wrestlers most of the time who were either nowhere near his calibre, or had nowhere near his motivation.

9. JUMBO TSURUTA: Still the best working big man in the game. Tsuruta fell from his level of last year largely due to illness, but his timing and execution remains first-rate, he never blows up even though he's 41 and can keep up to the level of whatever his competition is doing. This past year, that was a high level.

10. KEIJI MUTO: Marked down because of his matches using the Great Muta gimmick. As Keiji Muto, he's got the amazing agility, flashy moves and great quickness and skill. He knows how to work great matches and can carry anyone of even average ability. As Great Muta, that isn't the case.

Just missing the cut to make the top ten were Rick Steamboat, Bret Hart, Dan Kroffat and Negro Casas. Masa Chono would have made it except he seemed to have fallen off ever since he won the NWA title. Rick Rude also seemed to have fallen off at the end of the year. I'd expect in 1993, as WWF reverts back to the gimmicks and Watts takes the style back about eight years, that the Japanese and those who work regularly in Japan who continue to innovate and improve their own style, plus learn from the Americans, Europeans and Mexicans and adapt the best of each style into their own will dominate any listing of top workers even more so as the years go on. At least until the U.S. promoters and in some cases wrestlers don't continue to stifle what is new in terms of match quality as being "wrong" because it's foreign in origination, it's going to be the rare American who will have the wide variety of maneuvers of those who compete regularly in Japan. Even if we catch up in that regard, we also have the drawback in the conditioning aspect. Americans still hold the edge in showmanship, but the top wrestlers in Japan are quickly closing the gap there as well.

NAME: JAMES BAKER

OCCUPATION: unemployed

BORN: 9/20/67 Framingham, MA

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: generous, kind, easy going

DREAM VACATION: wrestling tour of the continental U.S.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: drugs, morons, prejudice

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Jim Ross

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Stripes

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: soda, chicken, cheese

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Norm of "Cheers"

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: Quantum Leap

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: Brody vs. One Man Gang in '85 Lynn, MA The first time World Class came to Mass. Brody and Gang tossed each other until ropes

NAME: CHRIS MARTIN collapsed.

OCCUPATION: Renaissance Man (student, writer, dj, commercial voice-over guy, record shop salesman)

BORN: Yes. 7/10/68

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: dry, emotional, deceiving

DREAM VACATION: Cross country trek in a Winnebago

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: wind, Cy Sperling, and people who hang out in bars. (They're always in all the good seats.)

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Michelle Pfeiffer

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Doc Hollywood

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: milk, maraschino cherries, my friend Steve's head

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Bruce Springsteen

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: Country Kitchen with Florence Henderson

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: A weekend where myself and two friends drove to Philadelphia for a Goodheart show. Highlight was talking a total of two hours to Owen Hart and meeting Terry Funk, Abby and getting the original Sheik's autograph.

NAME: BRENT CLARK

OCCUPATION: Student at Niagra County Community College

BORN: 8/15/72

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: A sports nut!

DREAM VACATION: Going to a wrestling card either at MSG or Japan.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: steroids, aids, and this abortion crap that happened in Buffalo last year.

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Madusa, Sherri, and Woman all at the same time.

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Any Stevan Segal movie (Out For Justice is the best.

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: 7-Up, chicken fingers, pizza

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Jason Priestly

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: Unsolved Mysteries, 90210, Top Cops

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: June 26, 1990 Myself and my buddy Joe got the chance to meet Ric Flair and Arn Anderson and talk with them for 10 minutes before a NWA card in Niagra Falls.

THE TRIAL OF THE WCW HIERARCHY

by
Jeff Bowdren

August 27, 1993
United States Federal Court
Southern District
Atlanta, Georgia

"All rise! The Federal Court of the United States, Southern District, is now in session. The Honorable Richard Dozan presiding. Be seated.

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen of the jury," Judge Dozan began, "You have been selected as the jury in an interesting and precedent setting case. The class action suit is titled 'Hardcores, Inc' vs. World Championship Wrestling, which hereafter will be hereafter referred to as 'WCW'. The suit is brought on by a group of wrestling fans, 'Hardcores, Inc', and is brought against six men who are or were the hierarchy of the WCW promotion. The six defendants are: James Herd, James Crockett Jr., Ted Turner, William Watts Jr., Virgil Runnels aka Dusty Rhodes, and Alan Rogowski aka Ole Anderson. The suit filed charges, and I quote 'that six defendants did knowingly as an individual or as a group pilfer, loot, rape, disembowel and internally destroy the promotion known as World Championship Wrestling'. Those are the charges."

"It's a lie!" Rogowski screamed.

"Sit down Mr. Rogowski!" Judge Dozan responded.

Rogowski sat down, mumbling to himself.

"Now," the Judge said, "as I was saying. Those are the charges. I'd like to introduce the attorney for the plaintiff, Jeff Bowdren. The defendant's as a group are represented by Ms. Alexandra York. I'm now going to call on the attorney's to present their opening statements. This will give you an outline of their cases. 1st, for the plaintiff, Mr. Bowdren. Well, I thought, here goes nothing.

"Good morning. I want to say that I think that you the jury will find this case very interesting. You will enter a world that a very few are fortunate enough to get a look into. The world of professional wrestling. It's a business that was begun in the carnivals, so the business is very secretive, with a language all its own. You'll hear some of these 'carny' phrases, like 'mark, heel, face, booker'. The carnay word heel stands for the villain of the match. Well, if that's the case, then the six men you see before are the ultimate heels. I will call witnesses to testify about the character of these men. Such as Alan Rogowski: as Ole Anderson the wrestler, he was one of the alltime great bad guys in the ring. As Ole Anderson the booker, or matchmaker, he was a miserable failure. A man so consumed by bitterness and resent for others that he tried to destroy the promotion."

"Say that to me when we're alone punk!" Rogowski screamed.

"Mr. Rogowski!" Judge Dozan screamed. "One more outburst and I will have you gagged! Now sit down!"

Alan sat down grumbling, Ms. York whispering in his ear.

"Your honor, if I may," I continued, "Jim Herd. The former vice-president of WCW. A man who's total experience in wrestling before he was hired was as the station manager on a small station that carried wrestling. It left him woefully unprepared for life inside pro wrestling. Of course that didn't stop him from thinking he knew everything. But perhaps his greatest failure was in not admitting his own inadequacies. Plain and simple, the man had no business accepting the job he knew he couldn't do. He basically did to the company what Hurricane Andrew did to South Florida. He was a disaster."

Okay, I thought, so far so good. I scored with a few jabs. I have to keep piling up the points before I go for the knockout.

"Next is Jim Crockett Jr. If bumbling incompetence took human form, you'd be looking at it."

"Objection!" Ms. York said. "I don't think Mr. Bowdren needs to resort to name calling your honor."

"I apologize your honor," I replied. "I guess I couldn't think of another way to describe a so-called executive who allows a 50 year old family business to be bankrupted over the course of 4 years."

"It wasn't my fault!" Crockett yelled.

"Ms. York," the Judge said, "please control your clients."

"I'm sorry your honor."

"And who led the Crockett family down the road to financial ruin? Virgil Riley Runnels. Dusty Rhodes. The American Dream. Ha! Ladies and gentlemen, we will prove to you that this Dream was in fact a nightmare. You will hear testimony that this man, in charge of promoting the matches, deliberately placed himself in a position over younger and far more talented wrestlers. Time after time, talented wrestlers like Ric Flair, Arn Anderson, Bobby Eaton, Tully Blanchard all were made to appear inferior to Mr. Runnels. That is laughable.

"Your honor," Ms. York interjected. "Will Mr. Bowdren also be accusing my clients of killing a bald eagle or a spotted owl?"

"I accuse them," I responded, "of killing nothing more than the wrestler's spirit and the fans interest. One final point about Mr. Runnels. He tried, after a magnimous retirement, to force his son Dustin upon us. Lucky for the fans, his son happens to be very talented. Which by the way, can't be said for the son of William Watts Jr. 'Cowboy Bill' to you and I. Mr. Watts' son Eric is the current world champion for WCW, having beaten 12 men in one night in the Omni and a motorcycle gang from Savannah.

"Objection your honor, sarcasm."

"Sustained, Ms. York," Judge Dozan replied. "Let's stick to the relevent issues, Mr. Bowdren."

"I'll do my best judge. Ladies and gentlemen, Bill Watts was perhaps the greatest failure of them all to the fans. I will agree that from 1981 ot '86, Mr. Watts was perhaps the best promoter in the country. But after a five to six year retirement, Mr. Watts had lost his edge. He didn't show the ability to change with the times and his ideas seemed rooted in the 1970's. WCW as we know it for the past year has become a bitter disappointment for the 'hardcore' fan. Watts' idea of bringing in new talent was to hire his son and give him a guaranteed contract. But I'll get into later. Finally, Ted Turner."

"I hope this is a good explanation," Turner said loudly, "I don't even know why I'm here."

"Ted! Please be quiet!" Jane Fonda said from the front row.

"I apologize judge," Turner said. "Hey Jane, go grab me a hot dog and a soda, will ya?"

"Judge," I continued, "If Mr. Turner is done ordering lunch, I'll continue. Mr. Turner is included in our filing document because he has owned WCW since 1988."

"I have?" Turned asked. "It would've been nice if someone told me."

"Mr. Turner," Judge Dozan said, "I'm going to warn you that I'll expect no further outbursts."

"To continue judge," I said, "Mr. Turner has shown exactly the problem. He is a man of vast resources who refuses to use them on his own company. He doesn't want to be associated with a "pro" wrestling company and so uses it as a tax write off. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, we will prove these allegations thru individual as well as cumulative testimony and at the conclusion of the trial we will be asking for monetary compensation in an amount to be determined for the untold damage and carnage that these men have wrought to the once proud promotion known as WCW."

"Ms. York," Judge Dozan said, "Your opening please."

"Judge, the defense will reserve."

"Ladies & gentlemen, the defense has reserved their opening. The plaintiff will now present their case at their conclusion, the defense may or may not present their case. Mr. Bowdren, your 1st witness."

"The plaintiff calls Mr. James Cornette."

Oooooohhhhh! A murmur swept the courtroom as Jimmy walked in, suprisingly wearing clothes that actually seemed to match.

"Mr. Cornette," I asked, "how would you describe your stay in WCW?"

"Well, to quote someone famous, 'it was the best of times and it was the absolute shits'. Woops, sorry about that judge."

"What was bad Jimmy?"

"Have you got a few days? It was the most disorganized, chaotic place I've ever worked. It made working for Fritz Von Erich seem like working for an accountant. No one seemed to know from one day to the next what the hell was happening. The guy in charge, old constipation face (points to Herd)..."

"Objection!" Ms. York said.

"Sustained. Mr. Bowdren, please continue."

"Yes sir. Now Jimmy, you motioned to Mr. Herd and identified him as the guy in charge. Was he part of the problem?"

"In the same way that sex is part of the problem with V.D. He knew about as much about wrestling as I know about the rain forests in Brazil. Bottom line, he's an idiot and he's a mean, nasty one at that. Never had a nice word for anyone. Must be a real picnic to be married to. He'd sit in on the meetings for the upcoming t.v. tapings and come up with the most bizaare suggestions. He wanted to bring in two guys with hunchbacks."

"Hunchbacks?"

"You know, they couldn't be pinned! I mean, what kind of idiot comes up with stuff like that? Then he introduced the Ding-Dongs for their one brief, yet memorable t.v. appearance. They had bells all over their bodies. Oh yeah, that's the kind of stuff kids love..."

"Jimmy, are you familiar with the rest of the defendants?"

"A veritable rogues gallery. Yes, I am."

"Now, I think the jury has an idea as to your feelings as to Mr. Herd, but I want to get your thoughts, as someone in the industry, to the other defendants. how about Mr. Rogowskiaka Ole Anderson?"

"I knew two Ole Andersons. When I was a kid I'd watch him on the Saturday WTBS show. He was tremendous. The Ole that I knew as a co-worker and as a booker was just a miserable human being."

"Objection!" Ms. York said.

"Judge," I said, "I'd like for Mr. Cornette to be able to clarify."

"Proceed then Mr. Bowdren."

"Now Jimmy, what specifically do you mean when you say that?"

"Just what I said. I think he was very bitter about a lot of things. He was very resentful about all the money that the boys make today. He used to always give the speeches about how much tougher the guys were in his day and all that. I think he hated the fact that most wrestling fans in the U.S. are historically illiterate."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, you know, no appreciation for the old days of wrestling. He was a big star and now no one remembers him, that kind of stuff."

"What about Jim Crockett Jr.?"

"Jim wasn't a bad guy, just a terrible businessman. He had the number 2 promotion in the country in early '87. He could've and probably should've overtaken Titan Sports for the number 1 slot. But a combination of things kept him number 2. I made a lot of money while I was there so I guess I shouldn't complain. His brother was a bigtime weasel though."

"What were those combinations of things that kept him number 2? Did Virgil Runnels, aka Dusty Rhodes play a part in that combination?"

"Well, Virgil treated me pretty good."

"Let me just back-track for the jury. When you joined WCW in mid-1985 you were the manager of a team called the Midnight Express, correct?"

"Loverboy Dennis Condrey & Beautiful Bobby Eaton."

"Uh, yeah. And in '87 because of some personal reasons, Dennis Condrey left and was replaced by...."

"Sweet Stan Lane. The gangster of love. Bobby was the sultan of swing. Highest flying team in wrestling. Bobby was a hero to millions of boyscouts and Stan, well, Stan and the women...."

"Jimmy, relax. This isn't a spot interview. You think the combinations of those teams were pretty good, right?"

"Your damn straight. We always got more heat than anyone else on the card. We consistently had the best matches on the card, either us or Flair."

"You guys always had hot opponents. The Rock-N-Roll Express, the Fantastics, the Road Warriors."

"Yeah, I suppose."

"But you and your team were always on the middle of the card, weren't you? You were never quite put in a position to work on top. You and your guys were quite probably bringing in those big houses and meanwhile guys of far less ability were working higher on the cards. Isn't that right?"

"Um...er...I guess."

"You guess? Quit protecting the business, Jimmy. Who was the one man who could've put you on top that kept you in the middle?"

"I'm, uh, I don't....um," Jimmy stammered.

"You don't need to protect him anymore Jimmy. Who was the one man, the guy who pushed his own fat carcass to the top of the card, the guy who called himself 'the heartbeat of America', who promoted his own disgusting scar tissue, birthmark splotched, power crazed body to the top years after his days as a top draw had passed? Who, Jimmy, who? Who pushed himself in front of younger and far more talented men while the promotion began collapsing around him? Who, Jimmy was the man who kept Jim Cornette and the Midnight Express from truly achieving their due recognition as the best tag team of the late 80's? Who, Jim Cornette, who was the booker?"

"It...was...Dusty Rhodes! MAMA!" Jimmy broke down sobbing on the stand. "I'm sorry Dream, I didn't mean to tell...MAMA!"

A large woman rushed forward and hugged Jimmy, comforting him. Few seemed to notice that she looked suspiciously like Ronnie Garvin.

"I have a few more questions judge," I said, "But maybe a recess for a few moments may allow Mr. Cornette to regain his composure."

"Recess for ten minutes," Judge Dozan said.

I went out in the hallway, speaking to some of my prospective witness when I was suddenly surprised.

"Can I talked to you?" Jim Crockett Jr. said, tapping me on the shoulder. "Not out here, somewhere in private."

"Look," Crockett said after we were alone, "I know I lost my family business. But I wasn't doing it spitefully. I don't belong with those others. you can't file suit against me for being stupid."

We talked and haggled some more before I finally made an offer.

"I tell you what. If you testify for me and agree to not promote in the U.S. for another 5 years, I'll drop you from the suit."

"But I'm eligible to promote in 2 months!"

"Exactly my point. You may feel like your getting screwed, but hardcores have known that feeling for nine years."

"Look, whatever. Just get me the hell out of here."

I went back into the courtroom to announce to the judge that I was dropping Crockett from the lawsuit. Needless to say, the other parties were not too thrilled and cries of "backstabber" and "damn communist" went up in the courtroom. I then continued questioning Cornette about Watts and Turner, but Jimmy had clammed up. He was a nervous wreck and I noticed his hands inching towards a tennis racquet that had appeared during the recess. I deferred to Ms. York.

"Mr. Cornette, I just have a few questions," Ms. York said. "You are an active participant in the promotion of Smokey Mountain Wrestling, correct?"

"Yes, that's right."

"And wouldn't you say as a promoter for a competitor, its in your best interest to place those in charge of WCW in a bad light?"

"Well, not exact...."

"Mr. Cornette, isn't it true that while you were wiht WCW your position with the company was terminated because you failed to appear at a show one evening?"

"Ah, it was that goof Herd. He said...."

"Then its true?"

"Well, I guess."

"Nothing further judge. Your witness."

"Jimmy," I said, "I just have one more issue I'd like to touch on. Erik Watts is the current WCW world champion, correct?"

"Yes."

"Okay, and my final question, I guess towards your working relationship with Mr. Watts. Did you or did you not once say during an interview, 'Nepotism is not a victimless crime'?"

"Yeah I guess so."

"Let's hook 'em up Cornette!" Bill Watts roared, attempting to climb over the table to get to Cornette, who picked up his raquet and began swinging. Judge Dozan called it a day.

4th Day....

It had been a long, draining trial. The previous two days had seen me call Dave Meltzer, Terry Taylor and Jim Crockett, who spent the better part of a day covering his ass while trying to implicate every one elses.

"Mr. Bowdren, before you start." Judge Dozan began, "What's your schedule like for today?"

"Judge, I have one witness who'll be awhile and three quick ones who'll wrap up my case."

"Very well, call your first witness."

"Judge if you don't mind, out of respect for my next witness, I'd like to call on Greensboro, North Carolina's own Dr. Tom Miller to call him to the witness stand."

"This is highly unusual, but I'm beginning to enjoy this circus."

"Hey judge!" Bill Watts yelled. "We aren't the circus. That's the guys from Conneticut. WCW believes in athletic competition. Two men, hooking it up, just like...."

"Sit down Mr. Watts before I have you bound & gagged!"

"Okay, Dr. Tom, do your stuff." I said.

"Ladies and gentlemen, may I present....the 8-time NWA world heavyweight champion....from Charlotte, North Carolina. Space Mountain. The Champ. The Nature Boy.....RIC FLAIR!!"

The crowd burst into spontaneous applause as The Man walked into the courtroom, styling and profiling.

"He is The Man!!" someone yelled from the back. "Flair is GOD!"

"What's going on back there?" Judge Dozan asked. "Baliff, bring that person before me."

Baliff Raymond Traylor brought the long-haired male to the front.

"Who is this man?" the judge asked.

"Excuse me, judge," I said, embarrassingly, "This is Dave Flaherty."

"Have you been drinking Mr. Flaherty?"

"I did a couple of YagerMeister shots with Michael Hayes this morning. But I'm just here to show my support for the Nature Boy."

"Mr. Traylor, remove this 'gentleman' from my courtroom, and I mean NOW!"

"But what did I...Hey! Get your hands off of...Hey! That's my arm!...Watch it Bubba! He was Big Bubba! Kay Fabe! Kay Fabe! Ric, Ric! I'll send you out the Chuck Berry C.D.'s...."

"Sorry about that judge," I said.

"Let's just get on with it...Hey! Where did that sign come from?...Front Row Section D on Tour'. Baliff, tear that sign down!"

After more commotion, I finally spoke to Slick Ric.

"Ric, please tell us where you work."

"I work for Titan Sports."

"Did you become employed there of your own accord?"

"Not really. After a dispute with WCW, my contract was severed."

"This was while you were the recognized world champion for the promotion?"

"That's correct. My contract stipulated that I be given certain notice before a title change. I showed up for a t.v. taping one night and was told I was going to lose the strap to Barry Windham. I didn't have a problem losing it to B.W. He's a helluva wrestler. But my contract was breached dammit! So, I walked out."

"Who made the decision for a title change?"

"That would be Jim Herd as vice-president of WCW and Virgil Runnels as booker."

"How would you describe your relationship with these two men?"

"Strained. That would be on our best day."

"Why was that?"

"Well, Herd was probably never happy with me. I guess he got some heat about my contract I had. He was a very negative guy. As for Virgil, he and I just fell out over the years. Don't get me wrong. We made a lot of money together. But he just wasn't able to see when he had lost his heat. Sometimes a guy is the last one to know that he's really lost it. Virgil by the mid-80's had lost it. There were other guys there I could've made a lot more money with and worked a lot better programs with. Barry Windham, Magnum T.A., Ricky Morton, you name it. But it always came back to Virgil. He always had to be perceived as the flagship for the promotion."

"I was da dealer!" Virgil said, jumping up.

"You had lost it!" Flair screamed back, years of pent up hostility finally coming out. "I was in my prime as an athlete and I wasted it working with you every night. Every night with that same goofy false finish all over the country. We could see the crowds going down, the t.v. ratings going down! Let's put more heat on Morton or Magnum we'd say, but noooo! We always had to keep Virgil in the number one position. Well are you happy Virgil, you got to keep your number one position. You just don't have a promotion anymore."

"Objection judge," Ms. York said finally, "Is there a question?"

"No, not actually. Mr. Flair I'll ask you to only respond to a question from one of the respective counsel. Mr. Runnels, keep quiet."

"Now Ric," I continued. "There came a point in time when Jim Crockett sold out to WTBS. At that point, did you meet Mr. Ted Turner?"

"Hey Jane," Turner said, "wake up. They're finally getting to where I fit into this whole scenario."

"I met Ted Turner once," Flair said. "He came down to the t.v. tapings for a big dog and pony show. He shook everyone's hand, took a few photos with me and was gone in ten minutes. I never saw him again after that."

"Would that include from May of '89 thru February of '90 when you were the booker for the company?"

"Never talked to the guy. All my contact was Herd. It was when I resigned that Ole took on the job."

"What was your dealings with him like?"

"I think Ole basically respected me because I could work and we had known each other so long. He just wasn't a good booker, that's all. The guy's he brought in just didn't have it. He had no vision of what a good young guy looked like. He'd bring in guys who had worked for him fifteen years before, who were long past their prime. It just killed business because the guys were so terrible."

"Could you give the jury an example of one of these names?"

"The Junkyard Dog."

A detectable groan came up from the back of the courtroom.

"It wasn't my fault," Ole screamed. "Herd, he made me hire him!"

"Sit down pigface!" Herd shot back.

"Pigface! I'll show you pigface. Tommy Rich didn't get away with calling me that in '82 and neither will you!"

Ole and Herd lunged for one another but were separated by Baliff Traylor and returned to their seats.

"Now Ric," I said, "what was the final straw in Ole's booking reign?"
"Well, Ole was under a lot of pressure from the corporation to come up a hot feud. What he came up with was the Black Scorpion."
The groan from the crowd was even louder this time.
"It wasn't my fault!" Ole screamed, sounding more and more like a young Jimmy Garvin. "It was Herd, it was Herd...."
The crowd watched in stunned silence as Al Rogowski, aka Ole Anderson, legendary wrestling tough guy, broke down crying. Even the Nature Boy seemed touched.

"In his defense," Ric said, "he was in a position where the corporate types basically set him up for a fall."
~~"Ric," Ric said,~~ "As a desperation move, Ole put me under the Black Scorpion hood at Starrcade. I don't think he really had an idea as to how the angle would end when he started. Anyway, I cut my hair..."
"AAAAAAHHHHH!!!"

It was Dave Flaherty, who had snuck into the courtroom.
"How could do that you butchers!!" Flaherty yelled, lunging at the defense table.
"Baliff! Take that man into custody and put him in the drunk tank!" Judge Dozan shouted.

"Now Ric," I said after the commotion died down, "what happened after Ole got fired?"

"Virgil was rehired. It had been rumored for months, but it finally happened.. I really didn't have a problem with that. I got the world title back. But I think he was still holding a grudge about what happened in 1988 when he lost the booker position. But over the course of a few months he just began breaking me down, destroying my position and reputation. He tried to turn me into a tag team wrestler."

"And as you stated before," I continued, "you weren't given notice before the title change?"

"That's right. It was just another way to screw me."

"Don't you try and blame me Ric Flair!" Dusty screamed. "You were never da man. I was! I'm the Dream! I'm the man of the hour! I'm the tower of power! Too sweet to be sour!"

After yet another warning from Judge Dozan, I continued.

"Now Ric, I want you to tell the ladies and gentlemen of the jury just how you felt when they announced that they had stripped you of the NWA world title."

"Well," Ric said, giving a dramatic pause. then allowing his voice to rise in his own unique time perfected way, "I'll tell you just how I felt. I felt like I had been kicked, again and again. I felt like I was lying on the ground and Virgil, Herd and all of them were looking down on me going, 'Come on american boy, get up!', and then they'd spit on me and my legacy. How did I feel? I FELT LIKE THEY WERE ON A PICNIC, AND I WAS THE ROAST! But they couldn't keep me down. Why? Because I'm Ric Flair. The Nature Boy. And Virgil, Herd, Turner, Ole and Watts.... Whether you like it...or don't like it...sit down and learn to live with it...Because it is still, as it ever was...and as it ever will be...the best thing going...today, yesterday and tomorrow!"

The courtroom spectators stood and broke into applause. Well, I thought, that's certainly a good sign. Judge Dozan reprimanded the courtroom and admonished against any further outbursts. Ms. York stood up for her cross-examination.

"Now, Mr. Flair. Your now an employee of Titan Sports, correct? And wouldn't that tend to make your testimony against the head promoters of your competition just a tad bias?"

"Lady, my name is more associated with the NWA & WCW than any of the 'gentlemen' sitting next to you at the table. My testifying has nothing to do with being bias. It has to do with Mr. Bowdren and all the other fans having a point. WCW & the NWA has been screwed into the ground and the men at your table were the ones who did it."

"But couldn't you have helped it? You did after all, walk out. Isn't that like quitting? Didn't you quit on yourself and the fans? Wouldn't that make you a quitter? For a man who like to describe himself on interviews as a '60 minute man', it would seem as though you didn't have the stamina to make it through a tough stretch of road. Goodness Mr. Flair, I certainly hope your not as much of a quitter in the bedroom as you are on your job."

"Ms. York, I tell you what. You spend one night with me, and we'll see who quits from a lack of stamina. You'll get an idea of why I got the nickname 'Space Mountain'?"

"Nothing further judge."

"Just a couple of points," I said. "Ric, what was it like working for Bill Watts in the old Mid-South?"

"He was a hell of a promoter back then. But he was always a little tight with the buck. Some things haven't changed from what I hear. Bill's big thing has always been the net profit. These days he gets rid of all the big longterm contract guys and pays on a per-dieum basis. It's an easy way of making it look like your making more money than you really are. If he's getting money based on anything like that, he's probably raking in a nice hunk of cash."

For the first time, the court spectators noticed Ted Turner throw a glance the way of Mr. Watts.

I had finished with Flair and called my next witness. Dustin Rhodes. Old Virgil near about had a coronary when he heard the name called.

"Nooo! Not my boy! He'd never talk bad about his daddy!"

"Dustin," I said, asking my first question, "how long have you been wrestling?"

"I first got into the business in the late 80's."

"Honestly now. Were you any good when you started? Compared to now."

"I pretty much sucked, at least compared to now."

"And yet you always had a good spot on the cards."

"Daddy always tried to put me in with the guys who knew what they were doing. 'That's the only way to learn', that's what he said."

"So you were put on the good spots on the card on your dad's say so? To let you improve? Or was it maybe that he just couldn't stand to see the Rhodes name in the loss column? Isn't in fact true that the reason you were put over better opponents is because your dad was basically in control of the company at the time?"

"Well, I wouldn't say...."

"And isn't it also true that when your father came back to WCW in early '91 that he brought you in with the express intention of giving you the world strap? A move that was vetoed by the corporate bigshots, even though talent wise at that point you may have deserved it?"

"But I didn't...he wasn't going to..."

"LEAVE MY BOY ALONE!" Virgil Runnels boomed. "He should have been da champ years ago, and he would've been if I had a say in it. It's just not fair. I'm da bookah and I gots no say in what happens..."

Ms. York had no questions and Dustin left the stand, stopping to get an emotional hug from his boy. Virgil stole a quick glance at the jury to see if his sympathy ploy was holding water. I however, was about to let loose my SCUD missile on the courtroom. This was the salvo that I had waited all week to unload.

"Any further witnesses, Mr. Bowdren," Judge Dozan asked.

"Just one judge. The plaintiff calls...(dramatic pause)....."

Vincent McMahon!"

The courtroom broke into an uproar as the defense table became pandemonium. I sat back down and watch the scene unfurl with a smile on my face. Judge Dozan finally restored order with an edict that any further outbursts would be met with a contempt of court order. His patience, I thought, is about to be tested.

"Mr. McMahon. You are in fact the owner and operator of Titan Sports, INC. and all its subsidiaries?"

"Yes, that's correct."

"And as such, you are generally regarded as the leading promoter in the sport of wrestling?"

"Well," he said, the McMahon smirk emerging, "we don't technically refer to it as a sport, but I suppose what you say is true."

"And Mr. McMahon, you've been in the wrestling game your whole life?"

"My father and his father before him were involved in promoting."

"So you could safely say that thru the course of your life that you've had an occasion to be associated with every big name in the business?"

"Oh yes, definitely."

"And would one of those names in fact be one of the defendants today, Mr. Virgil Runnels, aka Dusty Rhodes?"

"Virgil worked for my father in the early 80's and then again for me as an in the ring performer from the summer of '89 to the end of '90."

"I see. Wasn't Mr. Runnels generally regarded as your major competition during the mid-80's?"

"I suppose. He was the booker for Jim Crockett during that time period and they were my major promotion rival, though I never regarded them as much of a threat."

"And, based on a conversation we had a few days before, there was a very good reason why you never regarded them as much of a threat?"

Vince looked over at the defense table, the smirk reappearing on his face. Virgil's face had gone a deathly white.

"I'll ask you again Mr. McMahon. Why weren't they thought of as much competition?"

"Very simple. Virgil Runnels was on my payroll from May of '87 to the end of reign as booker."

The courtroom went ballistic. Dusty leaped from the table to get at McMahon, followed closely by Watts and Ole, who were trying to get at Dusty. Turner yelled to Jane to get him another hot dog, and Herd yelled at the baliff about how the colors of his uniform were all wrong. I sat back, laughed my ass off. I looked at the back and saw Ric Flair, head held proudly. He nodded in my direction and flashed me a '4'. Yeah, I thought, the Horsemen. More than an attitude. Its a way of life.

Day 5...

"Ms. York," Judge Dozan said, "Do you plan on presenting a defense?"

"Yes judge. I'll waive my opening. I'll get right to my first and only witness for the defense. It's someone who I think will show the court and the members of the jury that Mr. Bowdren's motives aren't as pure and pristine as he'd have everyone think. The defense calls Mr. John Hitchcock."

A buzz passed thru the courtroom as old Mr. Parts Unknown himself entered the courtroom. She was up to something, I thought. John threw me a 'I have no idea why I'm here' look.

"Now Mr. Hitchcock," Ms. York began. "You've been a leading critic of WCW for a number of years, is that correct?"

"Hey, all I want or anyone else wants is quality wrestling."

"That may be so, but aren't you the leader of 'Front Row Section D'?"

"Yeah, what of it?"

"How the hell did you guys get the sign into my courtroom?" Judge Dozan asked.

"For quite a few years."

"And as the ringleader of that gang of terrorists, you've attended some of the P.P.V.'s across the country?"

"Yeah."

"And didn't you attend Super Brawl '91 in St. Petersburg?"

"Oh yeah. Sat right next to my man rowdy Bowdy over there," he said, pointing at me.

"And did something happen between you and director of security, Doug Dillinger?"

"Huh? Oh yeah, he said we'd get booted out if we kept making gestures."

"What sort of gestures?"

"Oh he thought me & Bruce Mitchell were making lewd gestures at Missy Hyatt, who I suppose technically is considered an employee of WCW."

"What particular sort of gesture?"

"Well....you know. Sort of like a blow-job gesture."

"And had you and Mr. Mitchell made this gesture?"

"No, as a matter of fact it was...."

As a matter of fact it was me, I thought.

"It was who Mr. Hitchcock?"

"It was Jeff Bowdren who made the gesture on t.v."

"That was you!" Missy Hyatt suddenly appeared in the back of the room.

"I've been looking for you! Here! Call me!"

A wad of paper with a phone number on it landed in my lap.

"Thank you Mr. Hitchcock for allowing the jury to see that this whole ridiculous trial has been nothing more than an attempt by Mr. Bowdren to get back at Doug Dillinger."

"Hey!" I shouted. "Let's not forget he crippled Sting! He also wouldn't let Hitch and Mitch keep their 'We've Herd enough' sign in Greensboro...."

"Hey big man," Hitchcock said from the witness stand, "I didn't know that's why they wanted me. I didn't sell you out. I swear....."

I woke up on the couch. The tape in my VCR was near the end of its 6 hour run. I saw the visage of Erik Watts on my t.v. He was talking about how he taught the Japanese the S.T.F. It was 2:10AM according to the clock on the VCR. The phone rang. I heard my wife answer it, half asleep.

"Jeff! Some guy named Turner on the phone from Atlanta. What in the hell is a booker?"

Oh noooooooooo....Not again.....

by Ron Lemieux

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING
Saturday, December 26, 1992
Bayfront Center
St. Petersburg, FL

Opening Match

Steve Austin and Erik Watts went to a fifteen minute draw at 14:22. John Hitchcock had sent us (Jeff Bowdren, Dave Flaherty, and myself) an "Erik Is A Weenie" sign to use for the show. But to Watt's credit, he was unflappable. Austin stayed in great heel character when we cheered his ring entrance. He told us to "Sit the f_ down!" Then he got in Flaherty's face and said, "I don't need you cheering me." Match was decent and Watts has improved somewhat. He's where he should be on this card and that's the opener. But Austin doesn't belong here. Bell rang just as Watts set in on the STF. Jimmy Suzuki walked past us and jokingly said, "Five stars". We'll give it ** Jimmy.

Battle Of The Sexes

Madusa and Paul E. Dangerously "wrestled" for 3:13 of what was supposed to be a 5:00 time period. Your basic comedy spots including one where Paul was doing the Rude hip gyration and Madusa gave him a groin shot. Was surprised Paul was here tonight as there were strong rumors that he was getting fired in Jacksonville the night before. The time limit expired after Ducey gave Paul some chair shots. She grabbed the mic on the way out and said, "Happy holidays to you, asshole!" What happened to the no swearing code Watts was going to enforce. * for comedy.

3rd Match

Brian Pillman pinned Brad Armstrong using the corner buckles for leverage in 8:54. I've seen these two work quite a few times and this was one of their solid bouts. Good moving match. **3/4

Grudge Match

Barry Windham beat Dustin Rhodes in 9:13. All action with no restholds whatsoever. I could watch these two all night. After a ref bump, Dustin hit the bulldog but no ref to count it. While the ref was coming to, Barry took off his boot and blasted Rhodes to score the three count. ****

Boxing Match

Johnny B. Badd knocked out Scotty Flamingo at 2:18 of the third round. Pillman seconded Scotty and Armstrong seconded Badd. Did you ever see a boxing match with headlock punches? How about kness to the gut? Would you believe a whip into the ropes? Badd was landing some shots that sounded good. Scotty's trunks ripped right down the middle of his butt and was giving our section some shots that we rather have not had. 1/2* for trunks splitting. (Bowdren's decision.)

Tag Team Match

Big Van Vader & Barry Windham beat Ron Simmons & Masa Chono in 13:03 via DQ. Barry subbed for Rick Rude who is out with a bad shoulder. Rude showed up in his warm-ups and did some mic work. Of course Harley Race was still there. I had my attention elsewhere when the crowd (?) exploded and I heard Jeff yelling, "You're still the dealer." (Refer to the WCW Trial in this yearbook if your lost.) I looked up and there standing on the ring apron was Dusty Rhodes and the place was going ballistic. He got the best pop all night. Could be a bad sign like, "Hey Bill, you should've theen the people popping, get me back in da ring." Dusty got an obligatory bodyslam on Race and then he and Rude left. Match was great with lots of action. All four worked hard. Finish came as Dustin ran in and started pounding on Barry for the DQ. ****1/2

7th Match

Sting pinned The Great Muta at 11:52 with a belly to back suplex. Finish made no sense at all since Muta gets a shot two days later for the NWA title at Starrcade. Muta was playing to us all night even asking if he should go up for a moonsault. Even though we told him yes he debated and Sting threw him off the top rope. You wouldn't believe how small Sting looks. ****1/2

Unified World Tag Team Championship

Shane Douglas & Ricky Steamboat retained the Unified belts beating Kensuke

Sasaki & Jushin Liger in 17:33. Hitchcock had also sent a Liger drawing which Flaherty held up. Sasaki kept tapping Jushin trying to get his attention and when Liger looked over he gave us a thumbs up. Hey, little things still excite us hardcores. Match was solid, not spectacular. But some moron started chanting "Boring" right after the opening bell rang. I told him that if he wanted boring go to a WWF card. After Liger did an over the top rope dive, Jeff asked the kid to start chanting boring now. Steamboat pinned Liger with a flying bodypress. ***

NOTES

Crowd was abysmal at approx 1,050. They pushed the tag titles as the main which to hardcores it was but to the casual fan, they don't give a hoot about thee japs as witnessed by people leaving as the main was announced.... This was the best house show I attended all year. The only two bouts that didn't belong were the boxing match and the battle of the sexes....After the card, Jeff and I went to Yucatans to see the guys while Flaherty went to Mons to see the girls. At Yucatans we ran into Dean Malenko and we talked for about an hour and a half. Real interesting hearing about his stories about Japan. He also told us that his dad Boris Malenko (Larry Simon) recently underwent surgery for some intestinal problem. All our best go to "The Great Malenko".....While talking with Dean, Scotty Flamingo stopped by and Jeff and I started telling him about how Austin was super staying in heel character while we cheered him. Scotty started giving us this speech about how we should boo the bad guys and cheer the good guys otherwise it takes heat off the guys. Get a grip Scotty, you sound like a twenty year veteran with the old way of thinking....By the way, don't be wise and think Yucatans is a gay bar, I just meant we went to see the wrestlers. Actually the girls in Yucatans are better looking than Mons women except they have clothes on.

An Invitation From Mike Gunter

WCW will be having its "Super Brawl '93" PPV on 2/27/93 in Asheville, NC which is a 2½ hour drive from here in Greensboro. John Hitchcock and I would like to invite anyone who would like to come, to fly into Greensboro and ride with us to the show. You see, we know of a topless club here where we can have almost as good a time as the one we had in Tampa. Plus I know most of the girls. You can reach me at (919)852-4860 (leave a message) or John at (919)294-0091. during the day. Hope to see you. We will have plenty of cars going.

Top Ten New WWF Merchandising Ideas

10. Bushwacker Sardine n' Onion Scented Underarm Deodorant Pads
9. Davey Boy Smith's Stretch Mark Vanishing Cream
8. Vince McMahon's 1/2 page pamphlet entitled "Integrity in the Wrestling Business - a Personal Viewpoint".
7. Ultimate Warrior Steroid Free Rubber Vomit Novelty
6. "Frankie Helper" Parrot Flavored Microwave Casserole Mix
5. Koko n' Owen's "World's Shortest Suspenders" Kit
4. Sensational Sherry Ultrasonic Shreiking Dog Whistle
3. Harvey Whippleman's Lonely Guy Latex Love Glove
2. Brooklyn Brawler's Personal Reference Guide to the Greenwich Village Club Scene.
1. The Skinner Drool Bucket

BB

a celebration of our beloved territories by Michael Lano a roast for Sam

May 8th, 1993. No names will be advertised or promised. But I will do my very best to make it the most memorable gathering of people honouring longtime NWA and St. Louis legendary promoter Sam Muchnick and ALL the circuits(whew) that anyone can dream of. And everytime I went to John Arezzi's great Weekend of the Champions Convention, or to Cauliflower Alley- I wondered why we couldn't attempt to draw out every great territorial worker and promoter we loved that was still on this Earth, but in a non-traditional, never-used way. With the death of Freddie Miller, 1992 was a devastating one in terms of legends and personalities lost. Even at this year's Weekend of the Champions III, I kind of needled John about bringing in Gene Kiniski; who would've exceeded John's budget and probably drawn not enough dollars to help keep the great Spotlight going. When I told Gene no, he asked me why don't I throw something to honour Sam and St. Louis.

Cauliflower Alley Banquets are successful annual April affairs in Los Angeles, and usually the guys leave saying, "hey, we ought to do this again real soon." But invariably, they don't or don't make the time for it. My Roast for Sam, Saturday, May 8th is a blatant ripoff of Cauliflower Alley Club, but with their blessing. It is dedicated to Buddy Rogers, "who would've been CAC East President, and spearheaded a similar banquet out here," said Lou Thesz. With the passing of Nature Boy, Bruiser Snyder, Shire and so many others so quickly; I don't think we can afford to wait for Cauliflower Alley events outside California. With the help and blessing of CAC's Karl Lauer, I devised a committee to get out, seek out and invite everyone who meant so much to us all those years prior to 1984. I am including everyone of you AR readers as helpers-especially you Yates and you Klon, on my committee- but I've received tons of help from Don Laible, Georgiann Makropoulos, Tom Burke, THE Jim Melby, Ric Carter, Mike Tenay, editor Ron for all his plugs, Chris Qualman and Gordon Solie, Lou Thesz, Verne Gagne, Walter Kowalski, Mrs. Paul(Valerie) Boesch, Mike Rogers, Theresa Demarie, Scandor Akbar, Fred Blassie, Dr. Bill Miller, Johnny Valentine and many others. Meltz wanted more confirmed names before giving me any kind of mention- which is needed ASAP so people can buy low-cost discount fairs now, and if they want to come, make their spring vacation plans around our Tribute Roast. I believe he and Larry Matysik feel I'm being way to ambitious and perhaps unrealistic. Larry even said he'd thrown Sam a few retirement functions back in the early 80's and "what more can we possibly do for Sam?" Well, I think we can do more. This is our community- I believe we are partly responsible for the health and post-career well-being of those women and men who broke their backs to entertain us in the most difficult possible manner. Many haven't seen one another for 20, 30 years or more. When I sent out a few fliers stating I'd like to reunite the Tolos Brothers, the Millers and the Lewins- it was stated as a desired goal. Mark Lewin had said he'd love to have his brothers get together with longtime partner Don Curtis, and John Tolos said on 11/23/92 he's at least 50% certain of coming. Terry Funk and especially Nick Bockwinkel said Dave can call them and they'll tell him they're coming. Of course I'm out of control ambition-wise. If 1/10 of the people I've invited come, it will be a lot of fun, especially for them. Dr. Bill Miller said even though he broke his back three years ago, he would love to get together with brother Dan, Kf brother Ed, Bobo Brazil, Sheik, Kiniski, and his best friend in the business, Karl Gotch.

I've found the best way to drum up interest and get about as good a commitment as you'll get when it's simply a get together and not something they're getting paid to do (i.e. paid autograph session)- and remember- these are wrestlers- many notorious for no shows - is to call everyone of them. From Dick Murdoch promising to drive Terry Funk from Texas to EMLL's Vampiro who say's he's coming merely out of our friendship- he doesn't know who any of these guys were. Then Sputnik Monroe, Tiger Conway Sr. and Broncho Lubich volunteering to be on my contacting committee restored my faith that people still love this business and the people involved. I don't EVER think we can do enough for Sam, and certainly not for our heros. Sam was only a handful of honest promoters that most regard with respect and affection. Add Gust Karas(K.C.), Don Owen(West), Frank Tunney(Toronto), Ed Don George(Buffalo-pre Martinez), Joe Malkowitz(SF), and beloved Paul Boesch(Houston), Shohei Baba(guess) and that's it. This Roast, this gathering, honours them. For those who arrive Friday, May 7th, the St. Louis Airport Henry VIII Lodge will throw a buffet welcoming party. If there's enough interest, I'll have dealer tables and full time activities all day Saturday and Sunday leading up to Sam's big roast. I am TRYING to invite all those who either worked for, with, or just loved Sam Muchnick and all the territories.

Yes, I'm out of control. The hotel is again helping with a morning Sunday Brunch where I plan on giving away lifetime achievement plaques to families of recently deceased greats. I am trying to get commitments from Valerie Boesch(got it), the remaining family members of: Dick Afflis, Leroy McGuirk, Mildred Burke, Wilbur Snyder, Pat O'Connor(this is a longshot- ditto Barbara Goodish), Eddie Graham, and others. But I repeat, the only confirmation we have is Mrs. Boesch, who's on several of my committees. Larry Matysik says Mrs. Goodish has a life outside the business she blames for Frank's loss, but why can't I try? Does anyone agree that our community, right here in the States, really didn't do much after Frank died for the Goodish's. Baba did, and continues to hold tournaments, turning much of the gate over to them. But other than one great tv tribute, did we do anything to pay respect to Bruiser Brody? Again, we as a community, or me as a lone idiot, should do something to show her how much we were the better for knowing Frank Goodish- that his life meant something to most of us. How many people attended the funerals for Rogers, O'Connor or Shire. Literally no one, and it's time we showed our respect and love. What would you like to see us do besides dealer tables for wrestling merchandise during the day. I thought of using the various 18 rooms available to have different wrestlers give lectures or press conferences, have one room showing nothing but wrestling tapes from Japan all day, another showing wrestling films from "the Wrestler" to "the One and Only" to "Paradise Alley," to Vampiro's new Lucha movie spectacular. At least those can be advertised as appearing.

But the only "no" so far was from Penny Banner and the Weaverlocks because she and Johnny are competing in a Senior Olympics trial on the 7th. John Tolos said he's 50/50 and would love to come. Everyone else said they will be there. Who will be there? Why not come and find out, and make it great. Your presence and support will show what we, as a group, are capable of. Like Bette Midler's movie, this one's "For The Boys... and Women!"

READER PROFILES

NAME: J.Z. TRAVIS

OCCUPATION: Figment of Jeff Zinger's imagination.

BORN: 1988 Woodstock, ONT

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: perverted, egotistical, vulgar

DREAM VACATION: underneath Christina Applegate

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: stupid questions

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Traci Lords

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: New Wave Hookers II

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: beer, cigarettes,
condoms

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Peter Norton

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: Get A Life

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: When Lady Blossom pulled what looked like a
big dildo out of her top for Steve Austin to use as an international object.

NAME: RIKI BRELAND

OCCUPATION: Law Enforcement

BORN: 9/25/62

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: calm, confident, cocky

DREAM VACATION: skiing or hunting Colorado

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: cigarette smoke, extreme liberal wackos

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Rush Limbaugh

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Christmas Vacation

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: dietrite cola, water,
o.j.

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: A mean, muscular Kevn Costner

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: WCW

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: Meeting Jack Brisco as a kid.

NAME: JOHN HITCHCOCK

OCCUPATION: Owner/manager of Parts Unknown the comic book store

BORN: 8/10/56

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: center of universe

DREAM VACATION: Going to the Louvre in Paris with Marilyn Monroe in
1955.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT:

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Steve Ditko

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Slaughterhouse 5

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: Diet Pepsi, cin-
mon rolls, a human skull

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Arn Anderson

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: The Sports Reporters on ESPN

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: When Magnum TA returned to Greensboro after his
crippling car crash and after he triumphantly limped to the ring to a
standing ovation we serenaded him with "Don't Drive Drunk".

"So long memory having
played a part in 1968

WRESTLING
Friday 8:45 P.M.

Southern Tag Team
★ Title Match ★

ALDO BOGNI & BRONKO LUBICH
MANAGED BY GEORGE "BLIMP" HARRIS
— VS —
UNBEATEN SAM STEAMBOAT & KOA TIKI

★ SPECIAL ★
CHALLENGE MATCH

"I have assured Sam & Tiki that after I finish with the Blimp, they won't have to worry about him interfering in their match," said Graham as he challenged Mr. Harris

EDDIE GRAHAM & GEORGE HARRIS
LES WELCH & THE VIKING
TITO ROMERO VS BUTCHER VACHON

WAR MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM
FORT LAUDERDALE—JA 51476
Reservations Made TH 7:30 P.M.
RINGSIDE \$2.50
RESERVED \$1.75
GEN. ADM. \$1.25

from the Sunshine state". Those words are embedded in my grown up in south Florida. I watched "Championship Wrestling From Florida" from the early sixties until the late eighties when JCP bought them out and closed the office. Except from a period from about 1972-79, I was an avid follower along with my cohort Dave Flaherty.

Dave always kept me appraised during the mid-seventies of what wild angles occurred or who came into the territory and was hot. One of my deepest regrets was that I didn't get to see Bobby Shane. Outside of Ric Flair or Terry Funk, no one got Dave going like Shane would. I can still remember how depressed Dave was when Shane died.

The first face that I went crazy over was Red Bastien. I'll never forget the Saturday TV show where he was interviewed. During it he showed a match he had against Johnny Valentine from San Francisco. At the end of the match, Valentine attacked him giving him repeated elbow drops to the throat. 'Ol Red was hemorrhaging really bad and I was going nuts! You can guess who the first heel I hated was.

The next show at Ft. Lauderdale's War Memorial Auditorium I got to see Red team up with Joltin' Joe Scarpa (Chief Jay Strongbow- Imagine my surprise when he surfaced in the WWWF as an Indian- talk about exposing the business.) They defeated their foes that evening, The Viking & Butcher Vachon. I was very impressed with Red's ring skills and could hardly wait until he got to face Johnny Valentine.

Soon afterwards, Red and Joe faced Valentine and his partner Boris "The Great" Malenko. It was a "Pier Six Brawl" which ended in a DQ. for Valentine and Malenko. Believe it or not I don't remember how the feud ended. For some reason I think Red simply left the territory before the feud's payoff. Wrestling was banned at War Memorial Auditorium a few weeks later. It seems a riot broke out during a match between Eddie Graham and George "The Blimp" Harris.

"Hey Dad, will ya take us to see it?" Dave and I would beg my father each week to make the haul to Miami or West Palm Beach to see live wrestling. Most of the time he would say he was too busy. But on occasion he would relent and take us to West Palm Beach. He hated to go to Miami. These trips were filled with Dad's tall tales. Such as: "When I was in England during WWII the fog was so bad and the mosquitos so big that at the airfield they'd pump fifty gallons of gas into one before they realized it was a mosquito and not a plane!"

He'd also recall matches of his favorite wrestler, Chief Don Eagle, against the likes of Buddy Rogers and Mr. Koto. One of the perils of travelling with my father was he had a habit of spitting out the window while barrelling down the highway. Dave and I learned quick to hit the rear floorboard when he started to put down the window.

During this "Road Trip To Hell" period, we saw the coming of age of Jack Brisco. He started to get his push as the tag team partner of former Florida champ Nick Kozak. They soon gained the Florida tag belts and entered into a feud with The Medics managed by the Good Doctor. Jack even got into his own feud with the Good Doctor. He got his head shaved one night in Miami in a hair vs. mask match. The heat was incredible and the Good Doctor and The Medics barely got out of the building alive. It was after this feud when Jack was soon everyone's favorite. Another early feud was with Dory Funk, Jr. which actually turned into Family Feud! They soon brought in their brothers and classic matches for better part of the next decade would take place. One of my favorite matches was in Miami when there was a six man tag team match. Jack & Jerry had Eddie Graham as their partner and Dory Jr. and Terry had their father, Dory Funk, Sr. It was a barn burner and you should have seen Terry Funk. He was just a skinny teenager. Unfortunatley, a few years later, I didn't get to see Terry wrest the world title from Jack in Miami. I'd also like to hear how the NWA decided to give Terry the title when he was actually a sub for Dory Funk.

WRESTLING
DAYFRONT CENTER
ST. PETERSBURG

NWA
WORLD TITLE
MATCH
FUNK vs. BRISCO
WORLD CHAMPION CHALLENGER

DORY FUNK JR. SAYS
"I'VE GOT TO DEFY MY DAD ON THIS IF I DIDN'T PUT UP THE WORLD TITLE AND BRISCO BEAT ME, I'D BE BRANDED A COWARD. NOW IF HE
WORLD CHAMPION AND I
AGREE TO A NO-DISQUALIFICATION RULE."

SUPPORTING CARD INCLUDES JOHNNY VALENTINE, MIKE PAGGOSIS, GREAT SABA, BOB BOOP, THE THREE AND MANY OTHERS.

TUES. FEB. 8 8:30 P.M.

Golden Circle 5.00 - Ringside 5.12
Terrace 5.00 - Mainroom 5.00
Gen. Adm. - Adults 5.00 - Kids 2.50
RESERVATIONS CALL 898-6365

-the advertised challenger.

On yet another Saturday in front of the tube a masked man showed up on the program. He challenged and defeated Nick Kozak for the Florida title.

3-22-68

WRESTLING TONITE 8:45 PM

"SCARPA'S 'SLIPPER HOLD' IS A FARE!" said Butcher Vachon & the thing when asked about this Joe said "I'll show you how I use it... if I can't put one of 'em to sleep with it Promotor Eddie Cameron will have \$500 of my money waiting for them!"



JOE SCARPA VS. BUTCHER VACHON



NED BASTIEN VS. THE VIKING



TITO ROMERO VS. SAKAGUCHI



ANN JEANETTE VS. [Name obscured]

WAR MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA 33476
Reservations Made 'Til 7:30 P.M.
RINGSIDE \$2.50
RESERVED \$5.75
GEN. ADM. \$1.75

Lotharia and Argentina Apollo. The Outlaws defeated the ex-champs in what could only be considered a squash match.

The Outlaws were the first heels Dave and I cheered for. Heck, in Miami they had a cheering section in the mezzanine over the heels dressing room. Thank goodness Dave and I perfected the fine art of ducking from being around my father. Most of the audience were pretty vocal in their hatred of the Outlaws and liked to throw whatever was handy at the ring. Dave and I didn't have the sense to be seated in the mezzanine, we preferred the trenches ringside.

Of course the feud of feuds was between Florida's perennial favorite Eddie Graham and Florida's most despised heel Boris "The Great" Malenko. For sheer brutal violence not much could top their Russian chain matches. You'd swear they would need transfusions as well as stitches after the match. Even Onita couldn't top Eddie when it came to juicing. There were a lot of other great feuds but time and space prohibit from going into them. Maybe if there's a next time.

I'd like to give a special thanks for the memories to Gordon Solie, Eddie Graham, Boris Malenko, and especially "THE" cowboy-Cowboy Lattrall.

My most memorable moment in wrestling was when my family got our first color TV set. Dave was over and we were watching the Gladiator being presented a watch from his fans in Florida. Later on in the show, the Gladiator was in the ring wrestling. Out of the dressing room Joe Scarpa came running out. His face was a crimson mask! It seems Joe was jumped by Boris Malenko and his henchmen (Hans Mortier and Beautiful Brutus). They had destroyed Gladiator's watch of course. Joe bled all over poor Gordon Solie all the while moaning "I tried to stop them" to the Gladiator. Gladiator lost his composure and gave a great interview vowing revenge. Boy, the red was sure vivid on that TV.

Two mean looking men with suitcases came strolling down the aisle of the Miami Beach Auditorium. The matches had not started yet. "Where the Hell are the dressing rooms?" they screamed. Later on that evening they were introduced to that Miami audience as the Outlaws- Dick Murdoch and Dusty Rhodes. It was announced that they won the Florida tag belts the night before in Tampa. Instead of challenging, they would be defending the belts against the former champs Jose

GASPARILLA MIAMI

WRESTLING SPECTACULAR!



DORY FUNK JR. -VS- JACK BRISCO
CHAMPION CHALLENGER



SOUTHERN HEAVYWEIGHT

-- TITLE MATCH --

HIRO MATSUDA -VS- RENE GOULET
CHAMPION CHALLENGER



BRASS KNUCKLES
--TITLE MATCH--
CYCLON NEGRO
CHAMPION
- VS -
THE GREAT
MALENKO

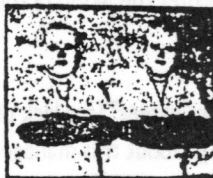
FLORIDA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH The INFERNOS

CHAMPIONS - MANAGED BY J. C. DYKES
- VS -

JERRY BRISCO & DEWEY ROBERTSON

TELEVISION TITLE MATCH TARZAN TYLER --VS-- BOB ROOP CHAMPION CHALLENGER

SOUTHERN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH



FLORIDA WOMEN'S
TITLE MATCH
ELLA WALKER -VS- BELLE
CHAMPION CHALLENGER

TONIGHT - 8:30

FT. HESTER ARMY
HOWARD & CASE - TAMPA

RINGSIDE (Rows 1-5) \$6.00
RINGSIDE (Rows 6-10) \$4.00
BALCONY \$3.00 (KIDS \$1.00)
TERRACE \$2.50 (KIDS \$1.00)

Res. CALL 253-0841

The MEDICS
CHAMPIONS
DORY -VS- JOSE
FUNK SR. & LOTHARIO

TV WRESTLING
SATURDAY - 8 P.M. - CH. 44
SUNDAY - 1 P.M. - CH. 10

From a Smart Ass Commentator to a Dumb Ass Manager: A Wrestling Career Analysis from Steven DeTruth

Scotty the Flamingo Body Anthony put it all into perspective for me one day when he termed my Steven DeTruth character as a "wise-ass rich kid with nothing better to do." So getting my chance to play the smarmy DeTruth on local Atlanta television as well as a — ahem — "global" scale was an opportunity I couldn't pass up.

Right from the get-go, well before Global reared its ugly head, I was hoping to create a character that really had no comparison in the grap biz (which of course didn't prevent me from stealing more than just a few bits from Bobby Heenan, Paul E., and James E. along the way). Frankly, I thought I'd pulled it off when an awful lot of people who should know better heaped plenty o'praise my way.

There were moments that I knew would stand alone in the annals of pro wrestling TV history — like Scott Hudson & I doing Point/Counterpoint in a cage, doing predictions for the Great American Bash with a crystal ball and smoke while dressed as Swami Salami Y'mommy DeTruth, bringing on a foreign chap named "Doostay Finnish" whose only line of English was "I want da belt!", and the semi-neo-quasi-pseudo famous bit where I challenged the "Blue Blazer" to a match at the Cobb County Civic Center only to have the "Blue Blazer" turn out to be a navy blue rayon/polyester blazer that had been hanging in my grandfather's closet since the Truman administration (I beat that nasty old "Blazer" with a "clothesline," of course).

Although it's certainly not the stuff with which world champions are made, I felt I had carved out one funky little niche for myself.

Money was never an issue; I never earned a nickel as Steven DeTruth on ESPN or even on the Atlanta Point/Counterpoints. Being a local actor who had worked in a number of non-equity community theatre productions where no one got paid anyway, I didn't think it unusual to work grat. Besides, I was still getting wheel barrows full of encouragement from respectable types like Messrs. Hudson, Horton, Heyman, Cornette, and Levy. I felt there was no stopping me.

Then my parade got rained on.

The non-Dallas GWFers were deep sixed and the wrestling block on Atlanta TV was given the old heave-ho. So what's a "wise-ass rich kid with nothing better to do" do? Enter the world of the "wrestling manager!"

Even a few scant weeks into this new "career" (for lack of a better term), I already have a few misgivings about this manager thing, lemme tell ya.

First, I don't know how to work, i.e. throw a few realistic looking punches and kicks, take a neat looking bump. Second, I don't have much of a desire to learn *how* to work feeling it will only lead to a minor injury that will probably nag at me most of my life or possibly *worse* (juice matches are the norm around these parts, and you know where *that* could lead. I wear surgical gloves these days - safe managing, y'know). Third, managing wrestlers at spot shows in rural north Georgia towns leaves me with limited creative scenarios to work with that haven't already been done to death — considering the *carte blanche* I had on TV, at least. Another problem is that as a manager, you gotta act like a dumb ass more often than not. The smart ass part I've got down. The dumb ass part feels a might peculiar. More importantly, I feel that the manager role really compromises the DeTruth character. Lastly, a wrestling manager is such a damn traditional role, I feel it's best left to the Homer O'Dells and Jimmy Harts of this world while others who have got particularly good gifts of gabs and creative outlets forge into new areas of commentating, skits, et al.

So here I sit broken hearted. As I type this, I'm managing Steve the Brawler Lawler tonight (8 November) as he wrestles Tommy Rich for the umpteenth time in a street fight match at the Douglasville National Guard Armory. It'll be a zoo, for sure. For the time being, I'm hoping there will at least be some security around the ring so every mark and his mother doesn't take a swipe at me and I can at least get out of Douglasville with my limbs and steel belted radials intact.

It's not that I totally dislike the managing bit. There are some cool moments in there. The heat's been good (north Georgia marks seem to hate the shit out of me), I got to tempt JYD with a twinkie, my guy Steve Lawler hasn't won the first match with me managing him (I think that's so cool), and I've ruffled more than a few babyface feathers. Maybe, I've just been too spoiled with all the "kayfabe envelope pushing" I've gotten away with over the last couple of years. I don't know.

But after tonight is over, I'm sure I'll still be mulling over what's left for me in this ridiculous world of pro wrestling, because I don't think it's in managing. I'm not sweating it out, of course. I've got a great graphic designing job here in Atlanta that I wouldn't trade for anything related to wrestling. But if there was some unique little televised outlet that Hudson & I could creatively play with (I don't do anything on TV without Scott Hudson - he's the best for my money) for anybody from the World Wrestling Federation to the White Trash Wrestling Association in Armpit, Georgia, my managing days would be over. I'm kind of hoping that day is coming soon.

Have a nice day...sort of.

SP

GEORGIA BOOKING: STILL THE SAME AFTER 12 YEARS

by Mike Gunter

The date was Monday, December 8, 1980 and the time was around 10:45 p.m. Frank Gifford, Don Meredith, and Howard Cosell were rambling on on Monday Night Football when Cosell made the announcement that "Police report a gunman has shot and killed John Lennon outside his New York City hotel." To anyone who grew up in the 60's or 70's this was a terrible blow. It was the end of an era.

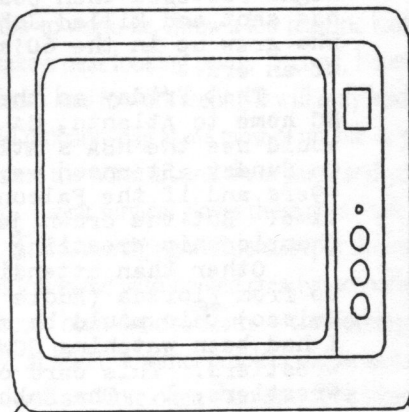
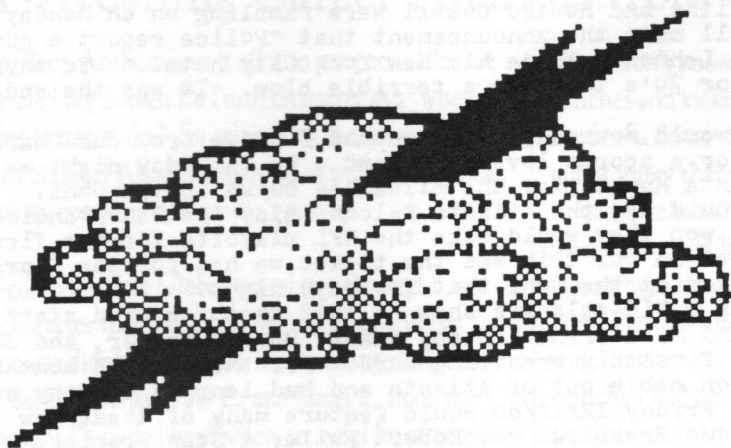
That Friday as the world mourned, a friend and I drove from our Charlotte, NC home to Atlanta, GA for a sports lovers weekend. On Saturday night we would see the NBA's Atlanta Hawks play the Milwaukee Bucks in the Omni. On Sunday afternoon we would see the Atlanta Falcons play the San Francisco 49ers and if the Falcons won they would make the NFL playoffs for the first time. But the crown jewel in our trip was the ticket we had for the Georgia Championship Wrestling card at the Omni that (Friday) night.

Other than attending a Mid-Atlantic show in 1972 that featured stars up from Florida (Eddie and Mike Graham, Bobby Shane, Dory Funk, Jr, and Jack Brisco) this would be my first big wrestling card. For the past 18 months I had been watching GCW on cable out of Atlanta and had learned of many new wrestlers. This card on Friday 12/12/80 would feature many of these new wrestlers: 1. The Fabulous Freebirds vs. Robert Fuller & Stan Frazier, 2. Ted DiBiase (in his Omni debut) vs. The Assassin, 3. Jerry Brisco vs. Killer Khan, 4. Jack Brisco vs. The Mongolian Stomper (managed by my boyhood idol Don Carson), 5. Mr. Saito vs. Mr. Wrestling II, 6. A first time ever heel Kevin Sullivan vs. Steve Keirn, 7. A woman's tag team match, and the main event featuring Ole Anderson. Ole had been in and out of the Carolinas for years but he ruled Atlanta. He was the top dog. Several weeks before this card Ole came out on TV and did a classic Ole Anderson interview. He said that there came a time in every man's life where he had to right some wrongs done him. He said that he had made a list of people who had done him wrong in his career and he was going to go down the list and pay everyone back. He would start at the top and his first match would be at the Omni.--at the card I was attending--and his opponent would be....Cowboy Bill Watts. Now I didn't know a lot about Watts but I had seen him wrestle on TV from Florida and a couple of times from Atlanta TV. Both men did interviews for a couple of weeks leading up to the match. A special referee was chosen: Bobo Brazil. I figured since Atlanta was Ole's town, since Watts was coming in for one shot, and since Watts was first on Ole's list, that Watts would put Ole over. It only made sense. This would then allow Ole to keep fighting men from his list building to a big showdown with someone like his old nemesis Dusty Rhodes. However like the current WCW booking, little sense was used as Watts won and Ole's list was never mentioned again. I've thought of that match a lot over the last 12 years. If Watts had been the third or fourth name on the list I could have understood him winning. I guess regular fans are not supposed to understand booking decisions.

The same can be said for the blatant push of Erik Watts. This subject has been beaten to death in the sheets, but I look at it from a different perspective. I too have worked for a large company which my dad ran. But the difference is I started out in a position consummate with my experience and busted my ass to work my way up. I was not put into a top position and given everything right away. I had to work and earn it and I'm glad. My dad has now retired and I'm secure with my position with the company, but when Bill Watts is gone (and he will be sooner than later) Erik will be dropped like a rock. But if he had started out low on the pole and worked his way up (like Dustin Rhodes or Brian Christopher) he would know what he was doing in the ring and his future would be secure.

I was one of the loudest in calling for Bill Watts to come in and return WCW to its' former greatness. I guess the old cliché about "Careful what you wish for, you just might get it." is true.

Now 12 years after my trip to Atlanta, two things remain the same: 1. John Lennon is still dead (and WCW maybe soon) and 2. Strange booking decisions still come out of Atlanta. Must be the water down there.



Arena Report Close-Up

BY STEVE BEVERLY

The Ratings: Clouds Approach The Tube

Only one year ago, *World Championship Wrestling* appeared to be leading the way out of the doldrums of decline in the cable Nielsen ratings for wrestling television shows. Two straight weeks in December, WCW rolled up 3.3 ratings. Its November *Clash of the Champions* special had rallied for a 4.3, its strongest in a year.

The World Wrestling Federation's programs were coming out of a slump. The week before Christmas, *All-American Wrestling* drew a 2.8 rating in 1.62 million homes, up from the same weekend in 1991, and *Prime Time Wrestling* rebounded to a 2.6. Though down from the blockbuster numbers of the previous year, the annual *Survivor Series Showdown* preview spectaculars had drawn respectable audiences.

LOW POINTS OF 1992

*** Three times during 1992, all of the five cable wrestling shows failed to draw a 2.0 rating in a given week. This had never occurred even once in a previous year.

*** In October, an all-time low rating average of 1.62 was recorded by the five cable mat shows.

Even ESPN's *Global Supercard* series was posting a 1.0 average, up 67% from the previous year's average for *AWA Championship Wrestling* and *Legends of World Class*.

So what caused The Great Crash of '92?

What created such a dire situation with viewers that in the early fall, one week saw no national cable mat series even attract one million homes?

What led to no *Clash* reaching a 4 rating and record lows for *Saturday Night's Main Event* and two *Survivor Series* preview specials?

What resulted in the worst one-season collapse for TBS' traditional Saturday night flagship show and WWF *All-American Wrestling*?

THE NUMBERS FOR 1992

WCW Saturday Night	2.2
WWF All-American	2.1
WWF Prime Time	2.1
WCW Main Event	1.9
WCW Power Hour	1.5

(Calendar-year averages from Jan. 4-Dec. 14, 1992)

The Ratings

***The easy-to-target culprits are the sex and drug scandals in the World Wrestling Federation and their subsequent fallout in TV tabloid magazine shows. The scandals were, indeed, a significant factor in audience falloff; however, only one of several.

***One can also point the finger at the failure of new formats on the primary WCW and WWF cable series to capture the imagination of viewers. New packaging, ever how well-

intentioned, does not always result in phenomenal acceptance. Definitely not in 1992.

***Talent stagnation, personnel defections, injuries to top performers and bizarre or recycled storylines are keys. Still, those factors have been developing for three to four years.

THE SCANDALS

The spinoff effect of nationally-televised coverage of the WWF scandals on *Inside Edition*, *Now It Can Be Told*, *Donahue*, *Geraldo*, *The CBS Evening News with Dan Rather* and assorted big-city talk radio programs was damaging---probably the top news story of the year in TV wrestling. The slippage apparent to cable wrestling in the second quarter of this year can be, in part, traced to the barrage of negative publicity. Very little in the way of a resulting sympathy came from casual viewers. The damage itself was worth probably three-tenths to half a rating point (180,000-300,000 homes).

But why didn't a resulting ratings collapse ensue in 1985 when the *20/20* John Stossel report aired featuring Eddie Mansfield's revelations of wrestling's inside secrets? Three primary reasons: 1) pro wrestling, on television and in the arenas, was in the midst of its biggest ascent curve in fifteen years. It was still a novelty with the celebrity circuit and its national repackaging was still fresh. One show, no matter how revealing, could have destroyed that momentum; 2) the *20/20* piece did not focus on behavioral, legal and moral problems which beset all of society and influence younger viewers. Stossel merely zeroed in on match predetermination and a perception which was already prevalent in many viewers, including wrestling fans; 3) the *20/20* story never pointed any serious fingers at the personal conduct or behavior at wrestling's chief symbol and kid hero, Hulk Hogan. Many of this year's tabloid pieces, when concentrating on steroid and drug accusations, featured performers who made outright accusations at Hogan in plain language.

THE NEW FORMATS

Wrestling journalists have rightly argued for several years national mat shows have needed a fresh look. The packaging had become stale. During 1991, TBS' three shows were virtually the same and the titles were inconsequential. The fall ratings momentum for the Saturday night show had been propelled by the returns of Rick Rude and Ricky Steamboat.

LOW END OF THE STICK

***The summer *Clash of the Champions* on TBS, the only one ever to air on tape-delay, scored an all-time low 2.8 rating and 4.4 share.

****Survivor Series Showdown*, which aired twice on USA in late November, averaged only a 2.0 rating. Two years ago, the specials registered a 3.7 average.

The Ratings

Kip Frey's decision to reconstruct *World Championship Wrestling* into an in-the-round, part fans' party, part talk show, sports and entertainment celebrity guest vehicle and incidental wrestling show was not misguided, merely ill-executed.

Frey intended for his personal stamp to be on every facet of *WCW Saturday Night*, from its fast-paced jazz theme music to its in-ring talk show setup at Center Stage to its two-out-of-three fall weekly main events.

However, in what came across as an attempt to reinvent the wheel, not all the spokes connected. TBS insiders, when they saw the pilot, predicted the show would lose a half-point from the then-2.7 ratings average for the Saturday show. Little did they conceive the decline would come in nine weeks and fall to a 2.1.

Had Frey focused on gradual, subtle changes to the product, viewers may have been more accepting. Had he concentrated on signing bigger celebrity names to co-host with Jim Ross, rather than a passel of NFL players, many of whom were not strong communicators, and Jason Hervey, he might have attracted more attention. Had some of the angles not bordered on poor taste (in particular, the one which attempted to portray Steamboat as a philanderer), more people may have sampled. Had Frey used this format in the more compact one-hour time period on Sundays and left Saturday night as a traditional wrestling show with new graphics and slowly introducing new elements, more success may have been found.

Instead, *WCW Saturday Night* came across as unwieldy and disjointed with few elements tying into a common theme. The cornucopia was reminiscent of what Roone Arledge attempted to do in the first season of *Prime Time Live* with a live audience and forced camaraderie between Sam Donaldson and Diane Sawyer. It nearly destroyed the show. Not until the program settled back into a more traditional newsmagazine format, relying on the strength of reporting and focusing on hidden-camera investigations, did it become a hit.

On the other hand, Vince McMahon's problems with *Prime Time Wrestling* were of an opposite variety. McMahon eliminated the complicated production format of his live-audience, sketch and location-comedy Monday night series and shifted to an easier-to-produce carbon copy of *The McLaughlin Group* and *Crossfire*.

However, there is one marked difference. Two hours of constant bickering across a table begins to get quite old to viewers. The concept has far less variety than the previous year's comedy format. Plus, the chemistry of the personalities has not always clicked.

Another very real factor one has to consider: as talented as they are as performers, McMahon and Bobby Heenan have been at this for nearly ten years, in one variation or another. The possibility exists that one or both may be growing tired with viewers, as well as the trite wrestling characters.

Finally, in 1992, *Prime Time Wrestling* faced a cable foe which had never surfaced as serious competition in the past: *Larry King Live*. The intense interest in the '92 Presidential election brought reality more to the interest of cable viewers more than the WWF fiction. As of mid-December, King had beaten *PTW* twelve of fourteen weeks in the ratings, some weeks by as large as a 2 1/2-to-1 margin. Maybe McMahon ought to hire Ross Perot and his flip charts to sit with him for a few weeks.

THE TIMES ARE A-CHANGIN'

*** In 1985, NBC premiered *Saturday Night's Main Event*, a monthly WWF series. The specials drew as high as a 12.6 rating, an all-time record for weekend late-night programming.

*** In 1992, *SNME* moved to the Fox network. Its November special scored an all-time low 6.1 rating and 10 share. The next week, the series it pre-empted, *Code 3*, a reality-based emergency series, registered a record 10.8 rating.

The Ratings

OTHER WOES

Clearly, the aging talent on both WWF and WCW rosters has created to the ratings malaise. When clips of a Ric Flair-Randy Savage WWF title change, which had been substantially promoted, cannot pull a 2 rating, two of the ring's legends of the last decade have lost their drawing power.

When Sting and the Steiner Brothers

cannot catapult a *Clash* special to a 4 rating, even the later stars are proving personality alone is not enough to gain the viewer's attention.

The loss of Hulk Hogan's presence may have some contribution. However, Hogan was never a featured performer on the WWF cable shows. Secondly, when Hogan made his last guest appearance on *Prime Time Wrestling*, the ratings actually fell to a 2.2 from a 2.4 the previous week.

As severely criticized as Bill Watts has been for WCW's product in the last half of 1992, the man is absolutely right when he says the lack of new, breakthrough personalities with broad-based appeal is what has created a "crisis" in professional wrestling. As Watts told me in a recent interview, "It may take years and a number of hits-and-misses before we find the right combination of people to recapture a lot of the people we've lost."

THE REAL STORY

Not to minimize any of the aforementioned factors—but the current slide in wrestling ratings, which has only been buttressed by a gradual seasonal rally in November and December, has been predicted in several circles for the last five years. The fall is something which could have been seen, long-term, as early as 1986 when many independent television stations began crowding their lineups with wrestling shows stripped five nights a week.

The public's appetite is just so insatiable for any form of sports or entertainment. In an early edition of *Matwatch* in 1988, Diane Mermigas, who now covers the television business beat for *Electronic Media* magazine, predicted the ratings for cable wrestling, which were then still prominent in the Nielsen top 25, would gradually fall. "As cable networks are able to afford more and more quality and original programming," Mermigas said, "I anticipate the ratings for wrestling to decline. There will be more of a choice for the viewer and less of a novelty for wrestling." In fact, the addition of the NFL, quality college football matchups, increasing interest in CNN programming, first-run movies on the USA, TNT and Lifetime networks, and more frequent live events coverage has obliterated the days when wrestling could pull 5-plus ratings merely by being on the air. *Prime Time Wrestling* will still draw a higher total rating than the three weeks of the U.S. Open tennis tournament on USA—but the U.S. Open will attract a far more desirable audience demographic for the advertiser.

In a sense, when wrestling became nationally-formatted in 1984, it was being repackaged as a brand new television show, in the same fashion as *The Cosby Show*, which premiered the same year. As opposed to a regional, sports-oriented audience, which was accustomed to a periodic changing of characters, wrestling was suddenly targeted toward a homogenized,

The Ratings

entertainment-oriented audience. Hulk Hogan, Roddy Piper, Gene Okerlund, Greg Valentine, Paul Orndorff, Barry Windham and Mike Rotundo and their various personas and styles of presentation were being introduced to many segments of the audience for the first time. The chemistry of these characters had to be right (some wasn't and adjustments were made) or the targeted audience would have pooh-pooed the entire transformation.

Just as in *Cosby*, *Designing Women*, *The Beverly Hillbillies* or *The Andy Griffith Show*, a core set of characters has to click to make a television series a hit. With wrestling's national television thrust, the same had to be true. When the characters of any established series become long-in-the-tooth, when stories become too far-fetched for belief, or when too many key characters leave a series, ratings inevitably drop.

When the *Cosby* kids began to grow up over eight seasons, the show lost its initial charm and the ratings the final two seasons were a shell of the series' megahit days. Raven-Symone and a street-smart niece could not replace the core family. While Jan Hooks has arguably fit into the *Designing Women* klatsch, Judith Ivey and Julia Duffy have been no match for the chemistry of Delta Burke and Jean Smart. *Designing Women* has now dropped to 55th in the Nielsens. When *The Beverly Hillbillies* began a series of feminist stories in the 1970-71 season, that was it for the Clampetts. People didn't want to see those stories with their favorites. *Mayberry*, *R.F.D.* was an acceptable effort to substitute after *The Andy Griffith Show* ended. But when Aunt Bee left before the final season, she was the last of the original regulars to keep the special flavor of the little community's ties. Even though Goober, Emmett and Howard remained, they weren't featured in every episode of the last season and the ratings fell for what had become *The Ken Berry Show*.

After nine years of intense viewer consumption, the core families of wrestling's initial 1984 series are basically gone or worn out. Hulk Hogan, despite his personal woes, was still the glue behind the WWF. His absence has been like Mayberry without Andy Griffith or *The Tonight Show* without Johnny Carson. Jay Leno may hang on but it will take him years to be accepted as his own man. Ric Flair is like a guest in the wrong house in the WWF, despite his still intense hardcore popularity, and is like suddenly waking up to find Dan Rather on NBC. The unique rabidity behind the King Kong Bundys, the Andre the Giants, the Mr. Wonderfults, the Brutus Beefcakes, the Hart Foundations and the British Bulldogs have been supplanted by a new core of supporting performers who simply do not have the luster or can capture the timing of what 1984 provided for wrestling as a television entity.

On TBS, viewers are still trying to adjust to the shock of their former guru, Flair, not being home every week. Not enough was done to solidly pass the baton to a Sting or another heir apparent early enough in the late 1980s to stick. Again, the supporting cast has not been strong enough to register intense loyalty, though WCW has again regained the lead in the weekly ratings---albeit at substantially lower numbers than year-ago figures.

Wrestling apparently does not have this luxury. However, if the cable networks could afford it, pro wrestling likely should follow the lead of Bob Newhart. When his CBS series have run their course, he's dropped off for two or three years and returned with a new format. That worked once, though the jury is still out on his new effort.

However, wrestling is in a dilemma not unlike that faced by troubled television news departments every day---how to improve ratings while still having to deliver a product. In news, the challenge is greater as the broadcasts air nightly. In such situations, history indicates refurbishing requires slow, subtle changes which don't trigger shocks to the viewer attitudes; the discipline not to tamper with new elements which do not reach huge new audiences in two weeks; and, most of all, patience---from broadcasters and from the audience. As demanding as wrestling journalists are, the latter, in 1993, may be a major challenge.

READERS' FAVORITE LIVE MATCH OF 1992

JIMMY MARSHALL Abdullah the Butcher vs. Steve Lawler 8/14/92 Cordele, GA
The best cards I attended in 1992 were promoted by the independant group Peach State Wrestling. This is based on quality matches, stars that are advertised showing up, etc. Being in Georgia gives the wrestling fan lots to choose from. In '92 I attended WCW cards in Macon, Atlanta, and Perry plus a WWF card Flair/Hogan also in Atlanta. Never did I walk out of the arenas with a good feeling. Hogan/Flair was a thrill to see but the match went as scripted in the newsletter and was a bore. P.S. wrestling cards are economical, they get you very close to the action (skating rink) and are fun to attend. Butcher vs. Lawler was the main event after a battle royal was held to determine match-ups. It was everything you expect from a Butcher brawl. Brawling and blood galore. They could have just taken down the ring before this match. They brawled in the seats and concession stand. A wooden bench was broken and many chairs dented. To our dismay we almost became involved. We scattered just in time. Tried to hand Abdullah a coke to use on Lawler but he ignored it. Needless to say it was a double DQ. Maybe next year my #1 match will be Ric Flair returning to WCW to beat Ron Simmons for the world title in the Great American Bash.

JAMES BAKER Steve Austin & Larry Zbyszko vs. Barry Windham & Junkyard Dog 3/28/92 Worcester, MA
A four star Bunkhouse Match. We Boston area fans are usually stuck seeing the usual WWF crap at the Boston Garden and Worcester Centrum all year round. Back in March we were treated to an appearance by the WCW. This match was just too wild to describe in full detail. It was just as good as the Jerry Lawler/Jeff Jarrett vs. Moondogs matches in Memphis. Highlights included: Windham smashing the ringside table onto Austin, Zbyszko being tied to the corner by Windham and being smashed by a chair, Windham breaking a 2x4 on Austin as he came off the ropes, and Zbyszko choking Windham with a plastic bag over his head. I'm sure many other New England fans will agree. This was a truly wild match. Had it been on PPV it could have been a strong contender for match of the year.

JOHN LANIGAN Randy Savage winning WWF title from Ric Flair at WMVIII 4/5/92 Indianapolis, IN
Match was rated highly because of Mr. Perfect's saves and the aftermath where Flair and Perfect beat the daylights out of Savage. Match was all Flair for the first eight minutes. Flair bladed around 12:00 and the only drawback of the match were the "suits" frantically trying to make Elizabeth leave ringside. Vince should have kept Pat Patterson until this match was over because he's the best at trying to back off folks at ringside. Savage's grabbing of Flair's tights for the pin cheapens his win a bit.

RICHARD STAFFORD Jake Roberts vs. Sting 8/15/92 Jacksonville, FL
Roberts vs. Sting was tremendous, mostly due to the crowd. There was so much heat in the Coliseum that I thought I was going to have to take off my shirt, God forbid. (The women would have went wild. Yeah, right.) The crowd was wild, and that added to the match that much more. There is nothing more I like at a card is to hear the fans popping at the top of their lungs and for them to hang on every hit. This match was my favorite for the '92 year.

DAVE SHERER Jushin Liger vs. Brian Pillman 12/27/91 (?) Meadowlands
WHY? I saw the legend live!!!

ROBERT GARRISON Steve Austin vs. Ricky Steamboat 8/29/92 Kansas City, MO
It was the only match I saw live that I rated four stars. Incredible, almost non-stop action, and Paul E. Dangerously was very animated at ringside. Austin won the bout pinning Steamboat after a stun gun with only 45 seconds left to go in what I believe was a 20 minute time limit bout. It was also the first time I ever sat in the front row at a wrestling show.

RANDY RAY My favorite live match of 1992 was on the worst card I saw all year. The match had Eddie Gilbert, Rod Price, and John Tatum against Barry Horowitz, Johnny Mantell, and Angel of Death in Gilbert's final GWF appearance. Gilbert was having a great time talking to fans, lighting the turnbuckle on fire, and doing his comedy act with Barry Horowitz in the ring. And then of course came his rampage at Max Andrews after it was over.

Rich Kraemer #1 Flair vs. Savage WMVIII
#2 Rude vs. Steamboat in Baltimore

THE 22ND ANNUAL GAG AWARDS

by J.Z. Travis with Jeff Zinger

Hey! We're back with the 22nd annual GAG Awards, published for the third straight year in Ron Lemieux's fab "AR" Annual. These "awards" originated in our late (1988-1990) mainly comedy sheet GAG, which dealt largely with rasslin'-but with lots of other stuff (comics, music, pornography, television, etc.etc.) thrown in, too-thus the eclectic (and probably mind boggling, for some) mix you are about to read.

The Hardest Worker Award: TERI WEIGEL

The 'Rasslin Artist Of The Year Award: JOHN HITCHCOCK

The Best Cartoon Of All Time Award: THE REN & STIMPY SHOW

THE Cy Sperling Wannabe Award: PAUL E. DANGEROUSLY

The Original Hot Love Babe From Hell Awardtm: MISSY HYATT

The Biggest Let-Down Award: BILL WATTS

The Shameless Self-Plugging Award: EVAN GINZBURG

The Hang Time Award: MADUSA.

The Best Movie Sequel Award: PARTY DOLL A GO-GO 2

The Coolest TV Show Award: THE LARRY SANDERS SHOW

The Worst Typography Award: KLON

The Bitch Of The Year Award: SHANNON DOHERTY

The Dusty Rhodes Nepotism Award: BILL WATTS

The Crime Doesn't Always Pay Award: ULTIMATE WARRIOR

The Most Obnoxious Comicbook Character Award: RALPH SNART

The Waste Of Talent Award: SCOTTY FLAMINGO

The Vanishing Act From The Letters Pages In "AR" Award: J.Z. TRAVIS

The Thanks For The Memories Award: JIM CORNETTE

The Ward Cleaver Award: RON LEMIEUX

Top Ten New Summer Olympic Sports

by Butch Bigelow

10. Ricky Steamboat Overselling Competition
9. Von Erlich Bleary Eyed, Dizzy Discus Throw
8. P.N. News Bottom Feeder Freestyle Swimming
7. The Beverly Brothers Bi-athalon
6. Van Hammer Glue Sniffing Contest
5. Pat Patterson Ring Boy Toss
4. Michael Hayes Caucasian Sumo Wrestling
3. Berzerker Free Form Floor Exercise
2. Steve Lombardi Casting Couch Trampoline
1. Kimala Cannonball!

1) Big Bill Smith beat Wild Bill Stanley. 2) Ex-Convict Snake beat Gentleman Rodney Cowan. 3) Steve Lawler & Jailhouse Rocker beat Scott Stud & Lee Thomas in a hog tied/strap match where all four were tied by a rope to each corner. As soon as you free yourself, you can join the match with your strap. 4) Magnificent #2 beat Sugar Ray Lloyd. 5) Tommy Rich beat Steve Lawler. NOTES: Tommy Rich didn't arrive until nearly 10:30 p.m., by which time the entire card was already done. Unfortunately, all the fans saw Rich walk in, so you couldn't give them a substitute match. Lawler was already hurt from the earlier match and was pretty pissed at Rich for showing up so late and in a somewhat inebriated state to boot. In defense of Rich, he did wrestle earlier that night in Augusta. The Lawler/Rich match had originally been billed as a baby bonnet match, but those stipulations were forgotten as we got a shoot-a-thon instead. Lawler and Rich brawled to the concession stand where Lawler dragged Rich's belly along the splinter strewn counter. ouch! Lawler also bashed my can of Diet Coke into Rich's head with such velocity, it would make you wince. Rich returned the favor. Rich Thesz pressed Lawler for the win. Don't think Tommy will be back anytime soon. I managed the heels in matches #3 and 4 (my first wins by the way), but upon hearing of Lawler's intentions and Rich's blood composition in the last match, I decided to sit this one out.

NEW GIMMICKS FOR SHEET PEOPLE TURNED WRESTLERS

Jeri "The Welfare Cheat" Mullins - This recently unemployed editor would launch his wrestling career in a feud with IRS, who would accuse him of buying beer, chewing tobacco and lottery tickets with his food stamps.

"The Jewelbreakers" featuring Marianne and Marilyn - This chick tag team is unbeatable and downright scary. Biting, eye gouging, scratching... they use every dirty trick in the book. Their patented finishing maneuver is a knee drop to the groin called "the Jewelbreaker", which always leaves their male opponents begging for mercy in a high pitched voice.

Lance "The Boil" Levine - Decked out in a giant pimple costume, the Boil forces hapless jobbers to submit by squeezing a white creamy substance on them through an open sore on his forehead.

Brian "Cradle Robber" Tramel - Whereas Bret Hart gives his shades to kids in the crowd, the always masked Tramel, clad in spandex Dr. Dentons, lures little girls back into the locker room with slices of stale pizza and promises of a puppet show featuring his wormlike little friend, "Mr. Willie".

Jon "The Invisible Editor" Gallagher - Managed by his equally nondescript valets Bill and Ted, the elusive Invisible Editor promises to appear on the card but always pulls a no show, stiffing all the paying customers. "Refunds? Hah! You'll have to find us first!"

Vic "Snailz" Stanley - already known for his excruciatingly long winded writing style, Stanley becomes known as "Snailz - the World's Most Sluggish Wrestler". This is no small feat since his first wave of opponents includes the likes of Michael Hayes, Hercules Hernandez, Dino Bravo and the Iron Sheik.

Dave "Just the Fax" Meltzer - Meltzer doesn't actually work in the ring, rather he wrestles by fax machine. He wins his matches by pummeling his opponents with a rapid fire attack of interview questions transmitted from California on his Japanese fax machine. While Meltzer's confused foes are busy trying to uncurl the pages, they are disqualified for having a foreign object in the ring. The referee then notifies Meltzer by fax that he won another match.

Butch

BUTCH BIGELOW
DEAD DOG, KY

MY NIGHT AS A WCW RING ANNOUNCER
BY Ron Lemieux

It all started back in December when I saw an ad on WCW Saturday Night running a contest for "Ringside Round-Up". The winner would get to announce a match at February's PPV "Super Brawl". One hundred second place finishers would get to announce at a house show in their area plus \$150.00 cash. The rest would get a WCW grab bag. Since my secret goal (not secret anymore) was to become a ring announcer for one of the big two, I figured this was my chance.

So I asked Japanese photographer Bill Otten if he could film me in his studio so I could make a demo tape. On the tape I put an introduction with myself giving my background and experience. I had Bill film me announcing a couple of matches and also included some footage of ring announcing at an IWF TV taping at Universal Studios. I figured, there is no way I can't at least get a second place finish (out of 100 that were available).

Well, Super Brawl came and went and we saw the goofball ring announce the match wearing his gym shorts. I figure Dusty must have picked the winner with a gimmick like that. Months went by and I hadn't heard a word. I figured my being a newsletter editor sealed my fate as far as getting a shot but lo and behold, in July I got a letter from Sharon Sidello saying I was one of the runner up and would get to announce a match in St. Pete on September 25. Between July and the 25th of September, I kept expecting to get a call cancelling my date, especially with Jeff Bowdren ranking all holy hell on Bill Watts and company in every issue of "AR". Well, the call never came and I was on my way to St. Pete.

When I arrived at the arena, I asked an official to see Chip Burnham (event coordinator). The guy obviously didn't know what he was doing as he brought me right to the dressing room area where I passed Michael Hayes, Hercules, and a bewildered Cactus Jack who just looked at me as if to say, "What are you doing back here." Well, as soon as the official brought me to the trio of Burnham, Gary Cappetta, and General Doug Dellinger I was wisked back out in the arena area. Cappetta brought me to a secluded area in the back to go over my match I would announce with me. Hercules (sorry Super Invader) vs. Van Hammer. WOW! During the bout I sat with Gary who I have known previously and we discussed my chance at fetting into WCW as a regional ring announcer. He suggested I contact Gary Juster who at the time was in charge of the ring announcers. Gary said he'd recomend me.

Monday morning I put a call into Juster who then called me back much to my surprise. He said they were thinking about going to a regional guy in Florida and had two other interested parties besides myself. We left it that I would keep in touch. At this point everything remains status quo as Cappetta is still doing house shows here and rumor has it Juster is no longer with the company.

I guess I'll just continue to ring announce indys here in Florida. But I'm running out of them. It seems after I do some work for them, they get pissed when I don't shill in my sheet for them and I'm history. Oh well, some things aren't worth sacrificing for. I will tell you though that if I got a job with either the WWF or WCW, this sheet would be history. Hey, remember my secret goal.

Something else may work against me though. I'm typing this on 12/26 and tonight Jeff Bowdren, Dave Flaherty, and myself are going to a WCW card in St. Pete sitting front row. Sitting with Jeff and Dave is bad enough (they rank big time on the boys) but add to that the fact that John Hitchcock sent some Erik Is A WEEenie signs for tonight and I can kiss my goal with WCW goodbye. Uh well, I don't want to give up "AR" anyways. The check you see below was reward enough.

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IT'S MY



By: MIKE TERRY

Back again with another scintillating bundle of merriment known as my 2-cents. This month, double your pleasure--or pain, whichever the case, as we expand for the annual.

Right at the top, my best wishes to all of you during this holiday season and may 1993 be the best year of your life. Some of you have taken the time to pass along favorable comments about this column during 1992, and I appreciate both your remarks and the continued opportunity to contribute to this fine publication.

Unfortunately, wrestling will not enjoy its best year in 1993. In many respects, it's impossible to top the mid 80's, but certainly we can judge the state of wrestling affairs in the new year in terms of the quality of the product we are offered. Let's all hope that we will enjoy an abundance of 5-star matches, intriguing angles, and sensible high-level management decisions.

I'm writing this column before Starrcade, so no comments on that which is probably good for my credibility considering the recent past. Last month I raved about the most recent Clash, which was generally panned by many of you. I also expressed how bored and disappointed I was overall with Survivor Series. The masses disagreed and seemed to enjoy it. Different strokes, I guess. One of the great and at the same time frustrating aspects of this business is that you'll never get universal agreement on anything. One glance at any issue of Arena Report verifies that.....One comment on the promotion for Starrcade. While the production values of the promos continues to be state-of-the-art, they don't seem to be selling the concept of Battle Bowl very well, and do you think they've really created the kind of excitement about the card in general that will translate into pay-per-view buckolas? Me neither.

The next part of this holiday/annual column takes a glimpse at the future, expressing continued optimism that we learn from our mistakes and profit from them in the future.

My crystal ball predicts the Slam Jam I album won't even rack up enough sales to pay the bill for its information phone number. In the new issue of WCW Magazine, Tommy Nast of The Album Network raves about the album saying it's destined for mainstream success. I used to respect Tommy Nast and his publication. They're highly regarded in the radio and records industries. Either Tommy's been misquoted or he doesn't put much value on his credibility. The rest of the article is pretty funny as it attempts to portray the producer as some industry superstar by citing his previous "successes:" *Badstreet*, *U.S.A.*, and Michael Hayes' solo lp. 'Nuff said. The name of the record company, by the way, is: Grand Theft Records. Seriously. And bolt the doors, lock up the kids--Slam Jam II is on the way.

And do you think that now that Bret Hart is WWF champ, they'll pen some new music for him?

The crystal ball looks ahead to the inevitable babyface turn for Razor Ramon. As a heel, he's mocked the value of an education. But a babyface must stand for all-American values. I can see it now--the WWF cameras follow Ramon's attempts to obtain his GED. "See Spot run, chico."

Frankly the crystal ball cracks a bit every time Slick comes on the screen these days. What's the point? Am I the only one who finds his "sermons" totally out of place? I'm really getting disgusted with this, or is that exactly what I'm supposed to feel? It does bring to mind an idea for a tag team: Slick and Tully Blanchard--the Ministers of Mayhem!

Seen Kerry Von Erich lately? Isn't drug testing involved with his probation?.....I see Bobby Heenan continuing to excel in his role. Is there anyone else in the WWF who is more consistent?.....If you haven't bought a subscription to the Shenanamuke, er, Shima, er, DukeKeomuka Post, do yourself a favor. It's an absolute hoot! Congratulations to the editors!

Quotes of the month: the original Sputnik Monroe with what must have been a shoot comment on Maniac Mike Davis: "I can't believe they made a wrestler out of this guy. Unbelievable!".....Brian Lee on SMW: "We're gonna blow the building right off the roof!".....Maurice Minnifield on "Northern Exposure:" "That's Kim Chee--a Korean cabbage--smells like an old pair of gym shoes.".....Jerry Lawler on "Superstars:" "Santa Claus was at the psychiatrist's the other day. He just didn't believe in himself anymore."

Does anyone in wrestling look dorkier than Grizzly Smith as he lumbers out to break up the altercation of the day? Or Rick Rude as he takes those little baby steps when he runs?

My vote for inspirational figure of the year goes to Jim Cornette. His accomplishments have been sufficiently noted elsewhere. I've derived so much pleasure out of watching Smoky Mountain tapes this past year, cause it is, generally, the kind of wrestling I like. Having said that, I must admit disappointment in a couple of the characters Jim feeds us: Dixie Dynamite and the Storm Trooper. My belief is that allowing portrayal of a Nazi in the 90's is despicable because of what they stand for. As far as Dixie Dynamite, consider the fact that young Mr. Armstrong proudly wears the symbols of the Confederacy. Consider all that stood for and you may understand why I feel it should be eliminated. The appeal of both characters is to the stereotypical toothless, brainless wrestling fan. Haven't we progressed any further than that?

I also noticed with some interest that Smoky Mountain's use of the plastic bag angle passed with no comments from the sheets, as did Cornette's advertising of Jackie Fulton's appearance on the Thanksgiving cards knowing full well he was in Japan. Hmmm...

Spare change: every day's a bad hair day for Doug Furnas.....why not bring Stan Hansen back to WCW?.....Tito Santana just doesn't seem to age.....some toupees look good. Then there's Stan Lane's. Must have purchased it from the Killer Kowalski Raunchy Rug Emporium.

My New Year's resolution? Deal with Don the mooch. Don has become my pay-per-view buddy. I see Don--oh--about 8 times a year--depending on how many pay-per-views are offered. Typically, 2 or 3 days before a pay-per-view, Don will call, acting all interested in my life, asking about work, my dog, etc. After a few minutes, he'll get around to inviting himself over, which is fine. Don's a good fella, but tight--cheap--stingy. Tight as Wild Bull Curry. I remember driving Bull from Cincinnati to Columbus one night for which he paid me \$2.00 for gas! And acted like he was being generous! And I wasn't even going to Columbus that night! I went over one hundred miles out of my way for 2 bucks! But back to Don. He's never offered to contribute to the cost of the pay-per-view, and I admit I really haven't been too assertive about asking him for money. One time I even laid out a spread of meats, cheeses, chips, etc., as much for myself as Don. So the next pay-per-view I say, "fine, come on over--this time you bring the food." Fine. He agrees. I didn't eat supper that night, expecting something similar to the spread I laid out for him. What does he show up with? A can of Pringles. And you know what? I ate the whole damn thing! So in 1993, Don and I are going to discuss the term "equality."

Finally, my feelings of respect and admiration to all the intrepid wrestling enthusiasts who enrich our lives so much through publications such as Arena Report. You've really got to admire what all these editors have been able to accomplish. Historically in our country, the press has filled the role of watchdog over government and the citizenry in general. And this country is all the better for it. Wrestling is similar. Consider where wrestling would be without the sheets. Megalomaniac promoters have suddenly found themselves accountable. Where would the steroid issue be today if the promoters and wrestlers didn't take such a pounding from the sheets? The wrestling business and wrestlers are healthier as a result. That's just one example of how the press can make a difference. There are certainly others. Who knows what promoters would try to put over on us if they didn't have the sheets breathing down their necks?

So editors--pat yourselves on the back. You deserve it. This Bud's for you! See you next month!

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LIVE REPORT

by Tony Aragona

CENTRAL FLORIDA WRESTLING FEDERATION

Friday, December 18, 1992

Citrus Showcase

Winter Haven, FL

Opening Match

Chris Nelson beat Crypt Keeper in 4:16 with a small package. Nelson is very young and from the Winter Haven area. Keeper had an elaborate costume and was led to the ring by a midget called Raven. After the costume came off, he was just a masked green worker. Nelson tried but Keeper didn't show anything. Only highlight was a dropkick by Nelson. After the bout, midget Raven came out minus costume and returned to his ringside seat. †*

Tag Team Match

Motor City Bad Boyz defeated Steven Green & Johnny Pavros in 7:16. Bad Boys attacked Green & Pavros at the bell and tossed both out of the ring. Boyz were accompanied to ringside by manager Big Business Brown complete with briefcase and beeper. The match itself was awful with the Bad Boyz missing everything including the finish which they had to do twice. Green looked good with a frankensteiner. Green missed a top rope dive and got hit with a DDT. Boyz went to whip Green into the awaiting briefcase but they had to do it twice. -*

CFWF Junior Heavyweight Title

Caibbean Kid Berto defeated Mark Starr by DQ. This bout was mostly mat wrestling with submission moves thrown in. Lots of arm and leg locks by both men. Berto throws good punches that look solid. Berto missed a charge into the corner. Starr hit abelly to belly suplex for a near fall, at this point Berto made the comeback and Starr hit the ref to retain the Jr. title. Starr plays a good cocky punk type heel ala Shawn Michaels. Berto had a Haitian cheering section. *†

4th Match

Buddy Valentine defeated Big "V" Verne Henderson with help from brass knuckles. Henderson is a former football player, with who or where is a mystery. Valentine was accompanied by manager Slick Willy. Both used stiff chops and the action shifted back and forth throughout. Buddy hit a powerslam and went up top for a dive but was met with a punch by V and crotched himself. Willy slipped Buddy the knucks and 1-2-3 pinned V. **

Florida Heavyweight Championship

Outlaw Cody Wade defeated Wild Thang Al Hardiman for the Florida title with help from the Motor City Bad Boyz and Lebanese Assassin (Tony Mella/Java Ruuk). Both men exchanged neckbreakers until Wade took advantage with a suplex. Match was slowpaced but with good heat as Al is over here in Winter Haven. Wade missed a top rope dive and Al went for a figure four. At this point manager Big Business Brown distracted the ref and out came the heels to attack Al. Wade then pinned Al for the title. Then came the faces and a brawl took place between Al and Wade with each taking sides. *†

Flag Match

Cuban Assassin defeated Randy Hogan. Cuban got great heat and really works the crowd well. Cuban (David Sierra) is ICWA champion over in Tampa and this was acknowledged here. Great bout with both brawling outside with chairs and slamming each other into the walls. Cuban shoved Hogan into the crowd and a row of chairs. They brawled onto the stage area where Shannon Rose, Ron Lemieux, and Paul Spiegel were seated. Both men juiced, Cuban's valet Fantasy handed him brass knuckles for the three count. ***

Southern Heavyweight Championship

Jon Force defeated Lou Perez for the title. Crowd was worn out after last match. Lou chased manager Slick Willy around ringside, Lou looks good and is solid but lacks color. After a ref bump, Force used knucks for pin and title. †*

NOTES

Crowd was around 350 and seemed to have a good time. A stage was set up where ring announcer Ron Lemieux and Pro Wrestling Weekly host Shannon Rose did interviews before the card and after each match. This made for some good interplay between the crowd and the wrestlers especially after

the Hardiman/Wade and Cuban/Hogan matches. Manager Brown is a decent talker but doesn't work the crowd well at ringside...Hogan comes out to "Real American" and made a comment to the extent of "You people know who my brother is"....The brass knucks finish was over used to say the least.... One intersting comment from Berto was, "Mark Starr, we both know shoot wrestling and we've both been to Japan." (?)....This group returns on Jan. 15th with Cuban vs. Hogan in a Coal Miners Glove Match.

Top Thirteen Reasons Why Newsletter Editors Suck!

13. Jealously refer to Meltzer only as "That Bitch" for wearing too much makeup on Donahue.
12. Constantly placed prank pizza orders to Jim Herd. Meanwhile Terry Funk and Eddie Gilbert got a busy signal.
11. Have all been honorable mentions in the annual Jason Hervey lookalike contest sponsored by the Human Growth Hormone Research Foundation.
10. Always stapling themselves by accident, leaving crusty blood stains on the cover page of my copy.
9. Never willing to tell me which wrestlers are really closet transvestites, which proves to me that one TV never outs another.
8. Always lying about how having a booth at wrestling conventions draws chicks like flies.
7. Too busy collating and xeroxing to have normal sex lives. Hairy palms cramp their typing speed.
6. Always spelling Jushin Liger and Madusa Macell ten different ways, never admitting which way is correct.
5. Are all actually Hulkamaniacs who never have the guts to just admit that they think Ric Flair is really a lazy, all hype, no talent prima donna.
4. All write their pompous, self-righteous, anti-drug editorials while in a drunken stupor.
3. Try to use Silly Putty to make cheap copies of back issues, then sell them for \$2.00 each.
2. Attend house shows wearing only tank tops and socks, then reveal title changes to anyone who complains.
1. Always plant phony top ten lists in their letters columns to make it look like they can take criticism.

BB

Butch Bigelow
Dead Dog, KY

Dusty's new
job after
this next stint
is over. Thanks
to Dave Wright!!!



READER PROFILES

NAME: ANDY POWELL

OCCUPATION: Sr. Accounting Clerk, husband, daddy (Not in this order.)

BORN: 5/11/55 Winter Garden, FL

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: honest, domestic, pleasant

DREAM VACATION: To "Get Away From It All" yet have the comforts and luxuries readily available.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: commercials

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Kathleen Turner

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Animal House

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: catsup, mustard, ice water

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: a southern accented Chevy Chase

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: Heat of the Night, Atlanta Braves baseball, and of course, wrestling shows.

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: 1. Brisco vs. Funk 2. Mike Graham vs. Bob Orton, Jr. Rasslin'- 1. Rhodes turn. Grahams vs. Rhodes & Pak Song.

NAME: ROBERT GARRISON

OCCUPATION: production artist for a small graphic art company.

BORN: 2/22/55 Independence, MO

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: shy, reserved bachelor

DREAM VACATION: A week in Tokyo with front row seats to at least one show of each major promotion, both men and women's.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: New Kids on The Block, basketball, grocery ads in my mailbox, obese office managers.

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: A good cook!!

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: skim, milk, sliced turkey breast, carrot sticks

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Burt Reynolds with long hair (strictly on facial features.)

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: Star Trek: The Next Generation

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: Sitting in the top balcony of Memorial Hall in Kansas City, KS on 12/11/75 and hearing the announcement that Terry Funk had defeated Jack Brisco for the NWA title and would be appearing that night.

NAME: LANCE LEVINE

OCCUPATION: rocket scientist, rodea clown, wrestling savant

BORN: 12/24/62 Chicago, IL Home of the Pervillion

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: serial buttocks fondler

DREAM VACATION: Disney World with unlimited C tickets

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: dumb surveys, Oz matches, Chuck Woolery

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Jeff Dahmer

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Porky's II, Citizen Kane, anything with Traci Lords

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: batteries, film, nail polish

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Bette Midler

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: Dukes of Hazzaed reruns

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: when Rick Steamboat said, "Oh yeah, I've heard of Chokehold." Or when Paul E. clocked Jason Hervey with the cordless. Or when I took a leak next to a giant masked wrestler at a Tampa bar and he uttered the imortal line, "Ugh, nice turd."

From time to time Klon and myself talk about what we would do if we won the Florida lottery which has gone as high as 65 million dollars. My first thought realistic or not is to start my own wrestling promotion. So for this column's sake, let's say I did win it. Who would I pick to try to turn this business around. A couple of ground rules before I give you my all-star cast. The state of the business is the way it is currently. I can not pick anyone from Japan because Bill Watts misused them so much that they have boycotted working for an American promotion. So lets delve into the Lake Mary Wrestling Federation. (LMWF???)

Since the business is the way it is I must make Hulk Hogan my first pick. He may not have packed them in before he "retired", but he's still the man who can put more people in the seats than anyone else.

My # 2-5 picks are the "New Four Horsemen". Two mainstays of the group, Ric Flair and Arn Anderson are picked 2 and 3. They will be joined by Curt Hennig and Shawn Michaels. Since all four are good to great interviews, they do not need a manager. You find a foursome more talented.

My sixth pick is the second most popular wrestler in this country, Sting. With both Hogan and Sting on cards together, how can I not draw. (No 2 shows a night in my federation.)

Next up are the "New Midnight Express" comprised of Beautiful Bobby Eaton and Terrific Terry Taylor managed of course by Jim Cornette. I was never too high on Stan Lane anyway.

The Steiner Brothers are my next choices for again the same reason as Sting and Hogan. Their popularity is almost second to none. I've been to shows where they got a louder pop than Sting. These two also give the federation credibility. Imagine an 8 man cage bout with the Horsemen vs. Hogan, Sting, & The Steiners... yow.

I then pick one of my all-time favorite tag teams in Tommy Rogers and Bobby Fulton, the Fantastics. A feud with Cornette's boys is a natural.

Since I have Hogan in the group I need a killer big man for a heel. I'll go with Big Van Vader which may shock some of you. There was a point I thought Vader was the absolute worst. The man has improved greatly. He's the perfect foe for Hogan.

We need some younger guys to carry the promotion into the future. I'll go with Brian Christopher and Jimmy Backlund. This of course creates a light-heavyweight division if I so decide to go that route. Both are great heels and do a great job of generating heat. Backlund working currently as a babyface is a total mistake. The guy is at home as a heel.

To combat Christopher and Backlund are Brian Pillman and Shane Douglas. I know many of you love Pillman as a heel but put over right he'd be a tremendous face.

Ricky Steamboat is a must for any promoter. He's an example you can point your young wrestlers to. A professional all around and a hell of a worker.

I'll pick Rick Rude to round out my heel contingent but if he doesn't get his lazy butt back into gear he'll find himself working for Herb Abrams in the "UWF".

And last but certainly not least, Erik Watts. Have I gone mad? No. We'll do a Jack Hart (Barry Horowitz) angle with him. He'll lose many matches to the point we are showing his record on the screen. But the difference being, I won't give him that first win. Heh, heh, heh..

My head booker is Jim Cornette. His assistants are Eddie Gilbert, Dave Meltzer, and Pat Patterson. A clause in Patterson's contract says if he gets out of hand and grabs one of the boys, Cornette gets to whap him with the tennis racquet.

So there you have it. The LMWF. Do you agree with my picks? Disagree? Let me know who you would have in your fed. Write me and I'll include your list in future issues of "AR".

Oh, by the way, my ringboy is Vince McMahon..... 38

STARRCADE REVIEW

As the show opened they explained that Rick Rude wouldn't be able to wrestle for the WCW title due to having a herniated disc. (He has a legit injury and will be out from 1-2 months) They announced that Steve Williams would take his place. 1) Dan Spivey & Van Hammer beat Johnny B. Badd & Cactus Jack in 6:39 in a Lethal Lottery bout. The fans were cheering the two heels, Spivey and Jack in this one. Badd almost killed Hammer with a standing-frankensteiner. Finish came as Cactus started yelling at Badd and Johnny hit him with a left hook and Hammer rolled him up. * $\frac{1}{2}$ 2) Dustin Rhodes & Big Van Vader downed Barbarian & Kensuke Sasaki in 6:41. Vader and Barbie looked lost with each other early. Barbie hit Sasaki by mistake and Rhodes rolled up Barbarian. Almost the same finish two bouts in a row. Do we want to reconsider renewing Dusty's contract? * $\frac{1}{2}$ 3) Barry Windham & Great Muta beat Brian Pillman & Too Cold Scorpio in 6:52. Interesting that they put Pillman and Barry on opposite teams here but they didn't do much with it although Jim Ross tried to say they had problems. Big pop for Muta. Some good moves but some missed ones as well. Most involved Scorpio which showed he's not ready for the big time which in essence means he's okay for WCW. Muta hit Scorpio with a bad looking moonsault. ** $\frac{3}{4}$ 4) Sting & Steve Williams beat Jushin Liger & Erik Watts in 9:07. I almost thought we'd luck out and Missy wouldn't draw Erik's name for the tourney. Second worst thought was how else could Bill Watts piss off the hardcores royally but have Liger do the job on a team with Erik. Luckily it didn't happen but it might as well have. Liger looked like a jobber as he had hardly any offense to speak of. We had All Japan vs. New Japan with Williams vs. Liger and kudos to Jim Ross for acknowledging that. I take everything I said about Erik improving back. He looked worse than his first pro bout here. If I were New Japan, I wouldn't renew my agreement with WCW just because of this bout. Watts got pinned. Yeah. ** $\frac{1}{2}$ 5) Masa Chono made Great Muta submit with the STF in 14:31. I was disappointed Muta didn't win the belt and also disappointed in the match. Too much mat work for my liking. ** 6) Ron Simmons beat Steve Williams via DQ in a reverse decision. Unreal how bad this match was. Now I knew Doc wouldn't do the job and I also knew he wouldn't win the title. So they go to a double count out. Fine. They should have left it at that. But they have Doc attack Simmons after the bell and they reverse the decision. Forget not renewing Rhodes. Make him pay WCW to work for them. * for the bout but I'll give it -* for ending. 7) Shane Douglas & Ricky Steamboat retained the Unified Titles beating Brian Pillman & Barry Windham in 20:00. Just a great looking bout that had it all. One of the best PPV bouts of the year. Shane hit Pillman out of nowhere with a belly to belly suplex to win it. **** $\frac{1}{2}$ 8) Sting powerslammed Big Van Vader in 16:49 to win the "King of Cable" trophy. Another great match between these two. Vader is so imposing. Both worked super hard and were both physically spent after this bout. *** $\frac{3}{4}$ 9) Great Muta won Battle Bowl in 14:02 dropkicking Barry Windham over the top rope. Here's how elimination went: Doc eliminated Hammer, Sting backdropped Spivey over, Sting and Vader both went over the top after a Sting clothesline, Doc clotheslined Rhodes over and they both went out. Barry sent Muta over the top but Muta pulled himself back over and hit the winning dropkick. Good surprise winner. I guess it was payback for the garbage Liger went through. Also probably a cookie to keep New Japan happy so they'll renew the agreement. ** $\frac{1}{2}$ NOTES: Thumbs up on the show. Tag title match gets my best match and Simmons-Williams. Is there any doubt that they need to get the belt off of Simmons. Even if Rude was't hurt, he wasn't getting the title.....Barry Windham was so on tonight it wasn't funny. He gets my #1 star. Vader gets #2 and Sting #3.....The fans were the most similar to a Japanese crowd than I've ever heard. They were popping for good moves whether heel or face.....Good thing they decided to use guys on the regular card in Lethal Lottery too or the bouts would have been terrible.....Rick Rude did a tremendous interview before the world title match.....That new music has to go. Keep playing that "Family Man" crap for Steamboat and he'll be hearing those boos he heard a few years ago when he used to bring Bonnie and little Dragon to the ring.....The burying of Steve Austin continues. Nowhere to be found on the card.

KLON5



UNDER THE MUSHROOM

THE PWI TOP 500 (OR SO) MUSHROOM STYLE

ANNUALLY THE MAGAZINE PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED RUNS A LISTING OF THEIR VERSION OF THE TOP 500 WRESTLERS. WHILE THE CONCEPT IS GOOD, THE CONTENT AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT IS RATHER BLAND. WHAT FOLLOWS ARE A FEW THOUGHTS ON EACH LISTEE.

STING-OVERRATED, POMPOUS ASS. THERE IS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CHARISMA BUT HOW MUCH IS QUESTIONABLE. LONG TERM BIG BUCKS CONTRACT IS CERTAINLY THE LAST OF ITS KIND. IS NOT REGARDED AS A SERIOUS HEADLINER IN JAPAN. RANDY SAVAGE-LOVED BY THE HARCORES AND CASUAL FANS ALIKE. HAS PAID HIS DUES IN MORE THAN ONE WAY. IN THE Waning YEARS OF CAREER HE IS NEEDED MORE THAN EVER. RIC FLAIR-THE BEST, THE PINNACLE, THE CONSUMMATE PROFESSIONAL WRESTLER. NOTHING MORE NEED BE SAID. RIC RUDE-COMBINES BOTH GREAT WORK WITH AN OBNOXIOUS HEEL PERSONA. ONE OF THE TRUE BAD GUYS IN A WORLD OF BLANDNESS. BRET HART-A TRUE WRESTLER AND GREAT ONE AT THAT. I HAVE ALWAYS QUESTIONED HIS CHARISMA BUT HAVE BEEN VERY IMPRESSED WITH HIS INTERVIEWS SINCE WINNING WWF TITLE. RICK STEAMBOAT-YEAR AFTER YEAR A SUPERIOR WRESTLER. BRINGS PRIDE TO THE SPORT. I WOULD LOVE TO SEE A HEEL RUN AS THE BLACK DRAGON BEFORE HIS DAY IS DONE. JERRY LAWLER-THE INTERVIEW MASTER. ONLY A HANDFULL ARE EQUAL TO LAWLER ON THE MIKE. SCOTT STEINER IMAGINE SCOTT STEINER WITH THE PUSH ERIC WATTS HAS GOTTEN. HOW DO YOU SPELL SUPERSTAR? TRUE ATHLETIC ABILITY, APPEALS TO BOTH SERIOUS AND CASUAL FANS. ULTIMATE WARRIOR-HE SHOULD HAVE BECOME THE DEMONIC WARRIOR YEARS AGO. STEVE AUSTIN-HE AND SHAWN MICHAELS ARE RIC FLAIR AND RICKY STEAMBOAT FOR THE NEXT DECADE. RIC STEINER-LAZY SACK OF DOG WASTE. PATHETIC WASTE OF GREAT TALENT AND CHARISMA WOULD BE LAZY AND CLOWN AROUND. HULK HOGAN-FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE HE AND VINCE MCMAHON MADE WRESTLING THE HOUSEHOLD WORD IT IS TODAY. BARRY WINDHAM-HE SHOULD NEVER BE A BABYFACE, A NATURAL HEEL WHO COULD HAVE BEEN THE TOP VILLIAN IN THE SPORT, IF COULD HAVE STOPPED RAMBLING AROUND. STEVE WILLIAMS-THIS COLUMNS FAVORITE WRESTLER. ARRESTED IN DETROIT WITH A GOODIE BAG OF MAGIC MUSHROOMS (AMONG OTHER THINGS) TO HELP ALLEVIATE TEDIUM OF JAPANESE TOUR. NO DOUBT THE STRONGEST MAN IN WRESTLING, TOTALLY INCOMPREHENSIBLE INTERVIEW, AND THIS MONSTER CAN WORK AND IS A LEGIT ATHLETE. I LOVE THIS CAT !!! BIG VAN VADER-LAST DEC WCW BROUGHT VADER TO MELBOURNE, I WAS THRILLED TO SEE ONE ONE THE STARS OF MY JAPANESE TAPES IN MY LITTLE HOMETOWN. LEMIEUX SAID I ACTED LIKE A KID IN A CANDY SHOP. ONE OF US HAS CHANGED HIS MIND. SHAWN MICHAELS-see above STEVE AUSTIN. JUSHIN LIGER-HEIGHT IS ONLY DRAWBACK. A WRESTLING MACHINE. THE WORDS TO DESCRIBE HIM TAKE UP THE REST OF THE PAGE. ARN ANDERSON-ONLY FLAIR COULD CHALLENGE ARN FOR HIS PROFESSIONALISM. I ADMIRE, RESPECT, AND HIGHLY REGARD ARN ANDERSON. RON SIMONS-HAS IT ALL EXCEPT CHARISMA. WHAT COULD VINCE DO WITH HIM? UNDETAKE-IS PACKING ON THE POUNDS. TRYING TO EMULATE HIS MANAGER. MULTI-CHINS ANYONE? TED DIBLASE-I WOULD PAY TO SEE HIM PULL OUT THAT BLACK GLOVE AND WHACK IRS. I ALWAYS HATED AKBAR BUT WOULD LOVE TO HEAR HIM COAX "TEDDY" ONE LAST TIME. BIG BOSSMAN-HARDEST WORKING BIG MAN IN THE BUSINESS. ONE OF MCMAHON'S GREATEST CREATIONS. ANIMAL-A NOTHING. WOULD HAVE BEEN NOTHING IN SIX MONTHS IF IT WERE NOT FOR HAWK. GREAT MUTA-STEVE BEVERLY ALWAYS SAID THAT MUTA COULD HAVE BEEN A SUPERSTAR IF PROMOTED CORRECTLY. CHARISMA IS STILL THERE BUT WORKRATE HAS GONE TO HELL IN A HANDBASKET. JEFF JARRETT-THE TYPE OF BABYFACE I ABSOLUTELY HATED. GREAT WORKER. WAITING FOR HIS HAIR MATCH TO HAPPEN. BOBBY EATON-DOES HIS JOB AND DOES IT GREAT. I WOULD LOVE TO SEE HIM IN THE WWF WITH HEETAN AND A PUSH AS A SILENT SAM. CURT HENNIG-MY FAVORITE BOUNCING BALL HAS RETURNED AS A FACE. HE'S TOO MUCH OF A SMARTASS FOR A FACE. CACTUS JACK-HE CAME BACK TO WCW AND SUCCEEDED. HAS HE ALREADY DESTROYED HIS BODY BEYOND RETURN? DAVEY BOY SMITH-HARCORES HATED HIS HAIRSTYLE BUT I HAVE PHOTOS OF THE SAME BEADED STYLE ON BRUISER BRODY AND TERRY FUNK. TERRY GORDY HE TOLD BILL WATTS TO TAKE HIS PROMOTION AND SHOVE IT. I'M PROUD OF THAT OL' SOUTHERN BOY. BRIAN PILLMAN-I ALWAYS THOUGHT HE WOULD HAVE BEEN A GREAT HEEL. A MGR MIGHT ADD THE FINISHING TOUCHES. GOTTA GET RID OF STUPID TRUNKS. EDDIE

GILBERT-DOES ANYONE KNOW HOW TO SEPERATE REALITY FROM BS WHEN IT COMES TO HOTSTUFF. MUST HAVE "SOMETHING" THAT STROKES THE LADIES THE RIGHT WAY. HAWK-YEARS AGO I WROTE A LONG PIECE FOR A TORCH YEARBOOK ABOUT HIM. HE HAS IT ALL GREAT PRESENCE, LOVED BY EVERYONE, GREAT INTERVIEW STYLE. HE HAS CARRIED ANIMAL FOR YEARS. NOW DAVE MELTZER SAYS THAT HE WILL BE THE NEW BRUISER BRODY OF JAPAN. DUSTIN RHODES-GREAT WORKER WILL HE EVER ESCAPE CADET? STYMA

TERRY TAYLOR-THE RODNEY DANGERFIELD OF WRESTLING, HE DON'T GET NO RESPECT. OWEN HART-WAS HE OVERBLOWN OR DID HE GIVE UP WAITING. IF HE KEEPS PUTTING ON WEIGHT HE MIGHT ONE DAY BECOME THE NEW ADRIAN ADONIS. RODDY PIPER-ONE OF THE ALL-TIME GREATEST. I TRULY MISS THE OLD RODDY PIPER. INTERVIEWS ARE IN MY TOP FOUR OF ALL TIME. BRIAN CHRISTOPHER-IF YOU HAVE NOT SEEN HIM IN MEMPHIS YOU HAVE MISSED A FUTURE SUPERSTAR BEING BORN. OBNOXIOUS LIKE RIC RUDE, A SMARTASS BIT WILL CARRY HIM DESPITE SMALL STATURE. LARRY ZBYSZKO-THE ONLY THING THAT BILL WATTS HAS DONE RIGHT AT WCW. LARRY Z IS A FIVE STAR COLOR COMMENTATOR. RAZOR RAMONE-I KNOW IT'S ONLY SCOTT HALL, BUT HE'S FUNNY HE TRULY IS. VINCE STRIKES AGAIN. ERAD ARMSTRONG-HE HAS ALL THE TOOLS. WHAT'S WRONG? WILL HE EVER GET HIS DUE? SCOTT FLAMINGO-ONE OF THE BEST MOUTHS IN THE BUSINESS. A YOUNG MICHAEL ^{HAYES} OR RODDY PIPER. TERRY FUNK-ONE OF THE GREATEST. SURPASSED ONLY BY FLAIR. HE COULD WORK, TAKE THE GREATEST BUMPS, THOSE INTERVIEWS WERE CLASSIC. WILL HE EVER BE BACK? MATT BORNE - DOINK THE CLOWN SO THIS IS WRESTLING 1993 ??? BORNE BURNED HIS BRIDGES YEARS AGO BUT A CLOWN ? WORST THING SINCE THE RED ROOSTER. I THOUGHT THE VODOO BIT WAS BAD LAST YEAR! CHECK OUT THE FILM "REQUIEM FOR A HUYT". A BOXER SELLS OUT BECOMES A CARTOON WRESTLER. HACKSAW DUGGAN-HE OWNS A HOME NEAR ME. A DRUGFREE POWERLIFTER, I LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY HE OPENS A GYM IN THE AREA. HE COMES OFF AS VERY LITERATE IN NEWSPAPERS LOCALLY. NO JOKING. WARLORD-NINETY PERCENT OF YOU HATE HIM. I LIKE HIM. HE WOULD HAVE BEEN GREAT IN A BIG BUBBA RODGERS TYPE ROLE. IF HE SHOWS UP IN SMOKY MOUNTAIN SOMEDAY WATCH WHAT CORNETTE COULD DO WITH HIM. SCOTT NORTON-FUTURE WWF SUPERSTAR VILLIAN AFTER JAPAN CHEWS HIM UP AND SPITS HIM OUT ALA VADER. DOUG FURNAS-LIKE JUSHIN LIGER, LACK OF HEIGHT HOLDS BACK HIS STARDOM. GREAT ATHLETE. AGILITY INCREDIBLE FOR A WORLD RECORD HOLDING POWERLIFTER. NEGRO CASAS-MY FAVORITE LUCHA LIBRE STAR. REMINDS ME OF TERRY FUNK. CHECK OUT THE NEW JAPAN SPRING JR HUYT TOURNEY HE SHOULD BE A MUCH BIGGER STAR IN JAPAN. HONKY TONK MAN -I KNOW CAN'T WORK AND NEVER WILL BE ABLE TO BUT I LIKE HIM. HE IS VERY FUNNY, REALLY! HIROSHI HASE-MY FAVORITE JAPANESE STAR. A WORKHORSE LIKE ARN ANDERSON. JESSE BARR-SICK IDEA OF THE DAY. BARR HAS A GLASS EYE THAT HAKU GAVE HIM WITH A CAR AERIAL RIGHT? CARL STYLES HAS A GLASS EYE THAT HE USES FOR EFFECT IN CIRCUITS AROUND THE WORLD. SO LETS HAVE FMW MATCH WITH BARR VS STYLES NOTHING WOULD BE TOO EXTREME FOR THIS SICKO CROWD. CAN YOU IMAGINE WHEN THOSE EYES COME OUT? DAMIEN DEMENTO-I LOVE HIS USING THE OLD KILLER KARL KOX BIT WHERE HE TALKS TO A KINDRED SPIRIT UP IN THE SKY. YOSHIRO ASAI-DOES ALL THOSE WILD MOVES OF LIGER AND MORE BUT HAS YET TO GET THE RECOGNITION OF LIGER (HE IS ULTIMO DRAGON). CHARLIE NORRIS-NEVER HEARD OF HIM HAVE YOU ? A LEGIT AMERICAN INDIAN, 6ft 6inches, 270pds, TRAINED BY EDDIE SHARKEY, HAS NEVER GONE BEYOND THE PWA IN HIS FOUR YEARS OF WRESTLING. NOT THE GREATEST WRESTLER BUT COULD BE A GREAT WRESTLING STAR IF USED CORRECTLY. BILL WILCOX-I WAS VERY IMPRESSED WITH THIS GUY OFF MCADAMS & BOYNS TAPE. WATCH FOR HIM. GARY ALBRIGHT-MY DREAMS OF SEEING ALBRIGHT TEAM WITH DARRYL PETERSON TO FEUD WITH THE STEINER BROS HAVE FLOWN AWAY TO THE WWF. PERHAPS ONE DAY IN JAPAN. ALBRIGHT AND PETERSON ARE BOTH OVER 6ft4in, 300plus pds, former amateur wrestling champions, and would have been PERFECT FOR THE STEINERS. BEN PEACOCK/BOTSWANA BEAST KIMALA 2 (JAPAN)-ONE OF WRESTLING'S MOST AGILE BIG MEN (375pds). I'M STILL WAITING FOR HIS BIG BREAK. GOT TO DO A JOB RECENTLY FOR WCW. PROVES HOW MUCH THEY KNOW ABOUT TALENT. MIKE DOGGENDORF-A CORRALUZO BOY WHO HAS WORKED MEMPHIS. HUGE AND SURPRISING. WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO GO TO JAPAN TO ESTABLISH HIMSELF. BULL MAN DOWNS-SOMETHING ABOUT BULL MAN REMINDS ME OF BRUISER BRODY. UNLIKE BERSERKER WHOM I FIND PATHETIC BULL MAN HAS SOMETHING. THE LAST NAME OUT OF 500 THAT MEANS ANYTHING TO ME IS FRED AVERY-SEEN PERIODICALLY DOING JOBS ON WCW. A BIG GUY (450+) WITH LEGIT TALENT IF ONLY THE CHANCE. ON GA GROUPS IS A TAG CHAMPION. FINI...

NAME: ANDY KING

OCCUPATION: Printer

BORN: 1/31/71 Middletown, NY

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: dedicated wrestling fan

DREAM VACATION: Ringside seats to any major PPV, with unlimited spending money.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: My job and the new mall being built in M-Town.

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Paula Abdul or Missy Hyatt

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Smokey and The Bandit

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: pepsi, milk, and beer (not for me)

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Nobody who anyone would pay to see.

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: Other than wrestling, I never miss Beverly Hills 90210 or Married With Children

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: Seeing my first live Hulk Hogan match (11/21/91) (Pretty sad considering I've been watching wrestling for seven years.)

NAME: JOHN MURTON

OCCUPATION: Advertising Accountant Coordinator

BORN: 8/12/46 Columbus, OH

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: organizer, intense, sensitive

DREAM VACATION: A sight seeing tour of the United States with a stop at every independant wrestling card along the way.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: The destruction that Vince has brought to wrestling, jerks, people that play the role

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Ric Flair, Lou Thesz, Nick Bockwinkel, Bruno Sammartino

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Casablanca

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: turkey breast, fruit juice, wheat bread

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Jonathon Frid

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: WCW Saturday Night

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: Getting a free beer from Bobby Heeman in a roundabout way. It's too long a story to go into here. And meeting Nick Bockwinel at the 1989 UAWF convention in Chicago.

NAME: ELYSE ZOIS

OCCUPATION: mathematics proffessor

BORN: 2/23/? Jersey City, NJ

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: intelligent, amiable, attractive (humble too)

DREAM VACATION: Winter in the Florida Keys

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: snow, brussel sprouts, Sgt. Slaughter, pro beach volleyball.

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Dan Quayle (Don't worry Marilyn, I'm married too.)

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Casablanca

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: coke, beer, string cheese

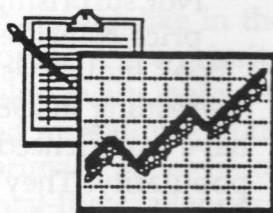
WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Shelley Long

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: Jeopardy!

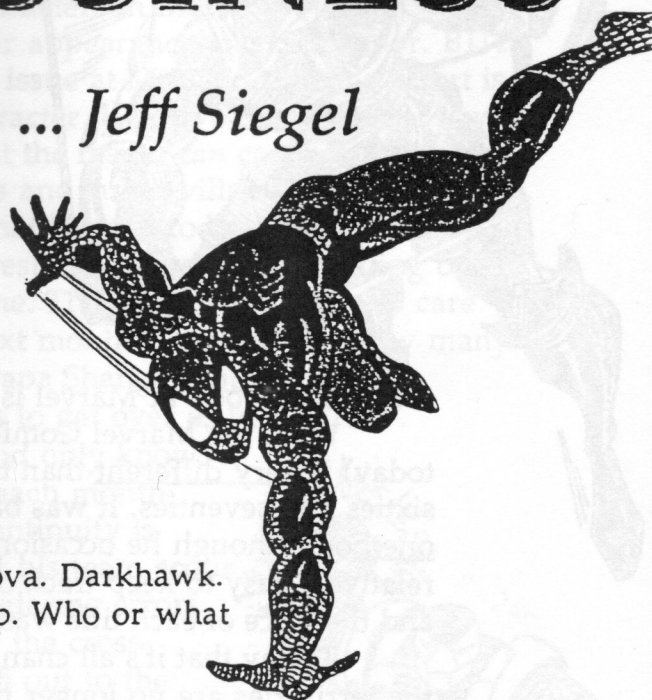
FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: Watching Steamboat vs. Savage in WMIII. I was hooked after that show.

STRICTLY BUSINESS

CARTOON Characters Unite!



... Jeff Siegel



The Punisher. Night Thrasher. Moon Knight. Nova. Darkhawk. Midnight. And "The Seekers" -- Chain, Sonic, and Grasp. Who or what are they?

The line-up for a Georgia indie? No.

The cast of a Gunter-recommended flick of dubious distinction? 'Fraid not.

It's actually just a partial listing of the super-heroes and super-villains who grace the pages of *Amazing Spider-Man* #355.

So what are we doing discussing comic books in the *Arena Report Annual*? I mean, it might make sense if I were John Hitchcock and the subject was "Parts Unknown". But I'm not, and this is **Strictly Business** -- which, actually, is where the connection comes in. Because the *business* of comic books -- particularly as it relates to a company called Marvel Entertainment -- has in many ways paralleled the development of the *business* of professional wrestling -- particularly as it relates to a company called Titan Enterprises...and particularly over the past several years.

When you get right down to it, comic books and pro wrestling are built on an awfully similar premise: position a fictitious of "worked" conflict as the focal point of a storyline that involves a variety of colorful, entertaining characters. In the process, try to get the reader/viewer to suspend as much of their belief as possible. In the comic world, that's the responsibility of the Writer, the Editor, and the Artists; in wrestling, it's the task of the Booker, the Promoter, and the Wrestlers. The desired result is pretty similar, too: make the consumer come back for more -- whether that means buying the next issue or the next pay-per-view.

So how does Marvel go about accomplishing that objective, something they've been doing very successfully of late?

Fact is, Marvel Entertainment, the parent company of Marvel Comics, has already established itself as one of the 1990's premiere success stories in the entertainment industry...maybe in *any* industry for that matter. The company took its stock public barely a year ago, at just over \$20 a share. Since then, in case you don't make the stock tables a regular part of your morning read, "MRV" has skyrocket past \$50, split two-for-one, and is presently trading close to that magic half-century mark again. That's a run-up of about 400%, give or take a dozen percentage points. And when money market funds are yielding a whopping 3 to 4%, that ain't bad.



Not surprisingly, this intense growth spurt in stock price coincided with an enormous pop in the comic book industry's mainstream appeal. Like pro wrestling in 1984, comic books and comic characters have experienced an undeniable resurgence in popularity. They're "in". And Marvel, like Titan way back when, has been the company within their industry to take advantage of it. To put it succinctly, profits at MRV are through the roof.

Somebody at Marvel is doing something right. But what is it they're doing? Well, the Marvel Comics of today (not unlike the professional wrestling of today) is very different than the Marvel Comics I personally grew up with in the sixties and seventies. It was back then that Spider-Man, for example, was featured in one book (though he occasionally made guest appearances elsewhere); villains were relatively easy to keep track of (the same ones would resurface on an annual basis); and the price of each title was 12 cents.

To say that it's all changed is as much of a gross understatement as saying that the territories are no longer the dominant force in wrestling.

For starters, Spider-Man is now proudly featured in no less than (and I may be missing a couple here) five titles, including "Web of Spider-Man", "Spectacular...", and "Amazing..." -- not to mention "Spider-Man 2099", a futuristic book that checks in on the wall-crawler in another hundred years or so. Now maybe that's to be expected, because Spidey is, after all, Marvel's flagship character...their Hulk Hogan, if you will. But upon further investigation, we find that the X-Men, for example, have three or four titles of *their own*, too.

So what are they filling all these books with? For one thing, lots and lots and lots of new characters. The litany of super-heroes and super-villains that appeared at the beginning of this column is a prime example. It used to be Spidey one-on-one with the Green Goblin or Doctor Octopus. Now you need a scorecard.

And speaking of the Goblin and Doc Ock, they're representative of most of the "bad guys" of the past: your basic boy gone bad who developed some type of gizmo or apparatus that made him a threat to take over the world. Today, it's tough to figure out where the androids end and the mutants begin. The "gimmicks" are limited only by what the imagination can concoct and the pencil can draw -- and that leaves it completely wide open.

Oh yeah, and on the matter of price: Try a buck a pop, and that's for the "regular" issues (some of which, like **Amazing Spider-Man**, now come out twice a month). Special issues and series -- and there's *lots* of 'em -- go for as much as \$3.95. So much for Wall Street's fascination.

But enough background on Marvel. Let's bring the world of the squared circle back into the picture, and ask this question: How has Marvel handled the explosive growth of their business during the early nineties compared to Titan's expansion in the mid-eighties -- and what can we learn from it??? Here's some thoughts:

Δ Yes, there has been a proliferation of new characters in Marvel's bullpen, many of whom are anything but human-like in their appearance and demeanor. BUT, enhanced character development is a priority issue at Marvel. A strong effort is made to legitimately develop every main character -- to give them several key personality traits grounded in reality -- so that the reader *can* care about them. They strive to make the primary super-heroes and super-villains as real as the situation permits -- with real-life challenges that happen to be played out on a different level (albeit a level that, like pro wrestling, *mirrors* what's going on in the "real world"). Talk to a comic fan sometime. They do indeed seem to care about what's going to happen to Iron Man next month. I can't say I know many wrestling fans who feel the same way about Papa Shango. **Bottom line:** It shouldn't be easier for legit cartoon characters to get over as being "real".

Δ Yes, there's a lot going on in Marvel-Land. God only knows how many titles actually hit the newsstands each month, because I don't. BUT, at the same time, the continuity is meticulous. Editor-in-Chief Tom DeFalco and his team scour every single book to ensure that there are no glaring errors or contradictions. (There aren't.) And most of the cross-references *between* titles are diligently pointed out to the reader. **Bottom line:** You can have a lot going on -- an awful lot -- and still make it both interesting and easy to follow.

Δ On a related note: Marvel storylines are being extended. Significantly extended. And they, too, are dealing with real-life issues (two recent Spider-Man series, while not without their fair share of hard-hitting action, featured storylines that dealt with child abuse and business corruption). A typical story might take four or five or six issues to play out; and, in the process, it might "cross over" into two or three other titles (read that "angles"). The Cowboy Watts of old would no doubt approve.

Δ **Finally:** The Marvel braintrust legitimately listens to, takes into consideration, values, and *acts upon* the likes, dislikes, and input provided by their customer base. Take a look at one of their "Letters Pages" -- they're not worked letters...and they only represent the tip of the iceberg as far as the interaction that goes on between Marvel and its fans (industry "fanzines" and numerous conventions receive the full support of Marvel's top brass). Suffice it to say that Stan Lee -- the Ted Turner of Marvel Entertainment -- would not shove Van Hammer down anyone's throat.

Soooo -- if you accept the premise that the primary difference between the entertainment media of comic books and professional wrestling is that one relies on pen and paper to fashion its product while the other uses flesh and blood, then what can pro wrestling learn from Marvel's latest round of successes?



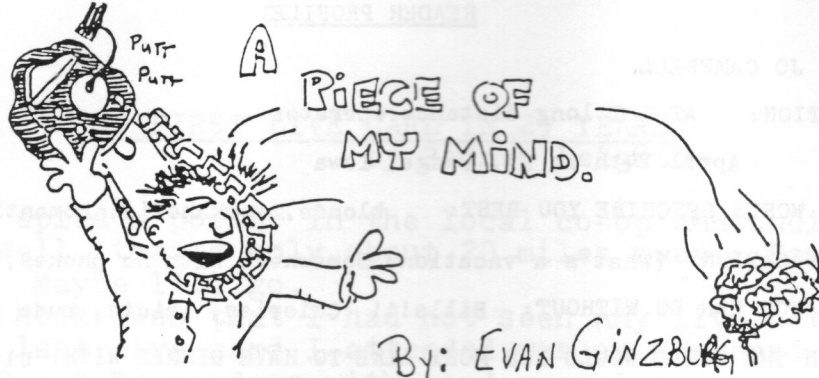
- First and foremost, and at all costs, make things as credible as possible. If Marvel can make us care about a man made of fire, then Titan should be able to make us care about Bret Hart *even more*. Credibility -- said another way, it means treating today's more sophisticated fans with the respect they deserve.
- Focus on plausible, well-developed storylines. "Quick hits" (in Marvel's case, one-issue stories) are a thing of the past. We all want to be left wondering -- thinking about what's going to happen next, and waiting in anticipation for the next piece of the puzzle.
- With an increase in mainstream appeal comes an increased responsibility to stay in touch with your audience. With ever-changing demographics, what used to work doesn't necessarily work any more, and in fact, probably doesn't. Responding to your audience is critical; Marvel recently created a new title for a character that originally debuted in Spider-Man -- Venom -- primarily because Venom drew rave reviews from comic fans everywhere. Stan Lee and Tom DeFalco know that they've got to "push" what their fans want -- and they don't take it as an ego-crushing blow to do so. If they were running the show, you can bet that Arn Anderson -- like Venom -- would probably get his own "title", too.

Of course, Marvel's not out of the woods just yet. Before long, they too will have to deal with issues like oversaturation; one-upsmanship (creating new and different "killer villains" is as much of an ongoing challenge as creating fresh killer heels); and the inevitable foray into new areas like movies (the much-ballyhooed full-length Spider-Man movie goes into production next year),

However, if Marvel's track record for well-thought-out planning, attention to detail, tapping into its audience, and all-around good business sense is any indication, then it's a good bet that they'll handle these new challenges with equal dexterity. It's a lesson that the boys in Greenwich and Atlanta could stand to learn from.

Excelsior!





As this piece is for Ron's annual, I'm going to do something a bit more traditional than my usual lashing out at the circus 1992 U.S. wrestling has for the most part deteriorated into. Here's my "Best of the Year" picks-- a handful of great moments that made me still glad to be a wrestling fan.

SINGLES MATCH OF THE YEAR:

If a tree falls in the forest and nobody hears it, did it really fall? Well, just because only 200 or so blessed fans got to see Terry Funk vs. Eddie Gilbert in Wayne, NJ in November doesn't mean it shouldn't get MATCH OF THE YEAR nod. Talk to Dan Reilly, Steve Dickinson, John Clark, Jody Boyns, Eddie Goldman or the handful of other hardcores in the criminally small crowd (what was even more scary was that many parents took the kiddies home BEFORE the main event), and they'll tell you it was a ***** 12 fall 27 minute classic. Just because it's not a PPV doesn't mean it shouldn't get the credit it most definatly deserves.

TAG MATCH OF THE YEAR/FEUD OF THE YEAR:

Lawler/Jeff Jarrett vs. Moondogs. Unbelievable violence and excitement, and again, I was lucky enough to be there live to see it. This was a throw-back to the 70's and Goodhart style of brawling action that hardcore Brody/brawling fans crave, and if you haven't seen it, contact Jeff Osborne, George Maranville or one of the many tape dealers and get your hands on a bunch of them, because I sat through a four hour Memphis tape featuring this stuff, and each and every bout was just GREAT.

CARD OF THE YEAR:

Forget the over-hyped PPVs- Dennis Coraluzzo's Nov. 9 card not only had the Funk-Gilbert Texas DeathMatch, but also a **** brawl between future superstars Chris Candido & Sabu, and also a **** brawl between locals Tommy Cairo and Damien Stone. Yeah, there were also a few clinkers on the show, but hey, if you can name ANY U.S. card this year that had three matches of this caliber, you were damn lucky to be there, because those days seem to be long gone.

I could probably go on and on with best of's and worst of's but the sheets literally do this stuff to death, so I'm going to quit while I'm ahead. Just wanted to congratulate Ron on the annual and the always enjoyable "AR"- believe me folks, I've said it so many times- you just have NO IDEA how much time and effort and sacrifice go into putting out "AR"- and there's not a helluva lot of money in it- keep supporting Ron and everybody out there have a GREAT Christmas/Chanukah/New Years.

And THAT'S a ho,ho, ho piece of my mind, friends...

TOP TEN TV SHOWS IN THE YEAR 2000

by Butch Bigelow

10. "Celebrity Steroid Casult:es" hosted by Davey Boy Smith - Lifetime Cable Network.
9. "Spicy Cajun Cooking" with Justin Wilson and the girls from Mons Venus- the Sexual Discovery Channel.
8. "Beverly Brothers 90210" - Fox Network
7. "The McMahon/Liar Report" - PBS
6. "Twin Peaks" starring Missy Hyatt, sponsored by Dow Corning
5. "Jake and the Fatman" - starring Aurelian Smith, Jr. and Michael Hayes
4. "Buried With Children" - starring Paul Bearer, the Undertaker and all the little Hulkamaniacs
3. "The All New Smoky and the Bandit" - starring Jim Cornette and Steve Planamenta- syndicated
2. "The Simp's Son" - starring Erik Watts
1. "The Golden Girl" - NBC

NAME: JO CAMPBELL

OCCUPATION: AT & T long distance operator

BORN: April 24th in Ft. Dodge, Iowa

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: blonde, workaholic, romantic

DREAM VACATION: (What's a vacation) Somewhere with no phones, quiet, secluded.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: Bills!!! Calories, idiots, rude people

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Ultimate Warrior

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Heaven Can Wait

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: champagne, cheeses,
diet Pepsi

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Bette Midler

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: besides wrestling, Zorro

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: When Vince got blasted with the phoney chair. I wish it would have been a real chair & he missed a couple weeks.

NAME: TIM WHITEHEAD

OCCUPATION: Circulation Supervisor; East Tennessee State Library

BORN: 12/9/58 Elizabethton, TN

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: bright, witty, conservative

DREAM VACATION: Seeing wrestling in Japan.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: Ridiculous wrestling storylines/title changes
not being recognized until they air on TV.

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Reba McEntire

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Metropolis

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: 3 cans of beer

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Rush Limbaugh (but only after he drops
150 pounds.

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: Jeopardy

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: When the Memphis fans nearly rioted after Jerry Lawler lost a hair match.

NAME: MARILYN RUNDLE

OCCUPATION: Administrative Assistant

BORN: 11/6/46 Poughkeepsie, NY

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: attractive, independant, insecure

DREAM VACATION: To take a year off and drive throughout the states and Nova Scotia visiting relatives and friends. And of course a few wrestling cards.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: liars, backstabbers, cat urp, and snakes

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Larry King

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Brian's Song

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: 1% low fat milk,
diet coke, Hagen Daz strawberry ice cream

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Kate Jackson

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: Jeopardy

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: Being at WMVI in Toronto, and it was when the Warrior won the belt from Hogan and the crowd noise was deafening and they embraced and the fireworks went off, Great goose bumps!!

MY FIRST LIVE CARD IN 2½ YEARS
by Rodney Leighton

Recently I spied a poster in the local co-op announcing wrestling in Tatamagouche. Well, that's only about 20 miles away. For a change I've got some money. Maybe I'll go.

One of the hooks was that I had not seen any live action in more than two years. The last live card I attended was an NWA card in Halifax in I believe May 1990. "AR" readers with good memories may recall that I rated a Ric Flair match at *½ (vs. Hawk); Randy Anderson was the best worker followed closely by Jim Cornette.

A stronger hook was that the announced main event was Stephen Pettipas vs. Leo Burke. These two are long time friends, partners (I believe) and have been faces in the Maritimes for years. I was curious as to who would be the heel. Of course, Burke no-showed.

Anyway, I donned my Torch T-shirt, which helped no one since it was cold and I had another shirt and a jacket on, and my "AR" cap and ventured out. Not counting staff, there were six wrestlers, one announcer and wife and kid, one ref, 40 kids, 30 adult marks and me in the building which is called the North Shore Recreation Center and is a hockey rink. It was Oct. 1st.

There was a guy selling black and white photos for 2 bucks. One was of Burke and Pettipas as a team, others of them singly. I went and asked him how he could sell pictures like that with them fighting each other. He had no answer and was sort of embarrassed, so I admitted to being a smart-ass. He told me the card had been changed which it sure had.

Listed on the poster as CANADIAN CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING, the first announcement was that it was MARITIME CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING. Second announcement was that Burke was in a hospital (uh-huh!) and Eddie Watts would not be there due to a death in the family. However, there would be a full card. Prices were \$8 for adults and 6 for kids under 12. Sit wherever you wanted.

1. Goldie "Nature Boy" Rogers went to an announced 20 minute draw with "Soaring Eagle". Goldie has been around for years. He worked this area in 1978 or so as "Macho Man" Goldie Rogers...until Randy Savage arrived when he dropped it. Goldie is a good heel, a good worker and fun. Soaring Eagle was announced as being from the Indian Reserve in New Brunswick which was probably legit since he's a real Indian.. Kid is pretty damn good. Unfortunately for him, he's even smaller than Lightning Kid so he won't go anywhere. They worked a very good match, including some top rope moves, some great bumps on the concrete and a ton of two counts. Incredible heat, especially for that amount of people. I gave the match ***½ and added ½* for the guys working that hard in front of such a small crowd. ****

2. The "Acadian Giant" over "Big" Stephen Pettipas by DQ. I suspect the Giant is one of Stephen's students from his school. A slightly smaller version of El Gigante. Crowd was dead. No action. Totally screwed up finish. Stephen gave him a karate kick, Giant took a horrendous spill over the top. Ref called for the bell but the announcer/timekeeper was chatting with his wife and they had to try it about 4 times. Double Dud.

3. The Cuban Assassin (Angel Avegado) and The Beast (Yvon Cormier) went to an announced 8 minute DCOR. Probably about 5 minutes. Beast still has the ability to draw heat. These two have worked together many times. Beast has been retired for a few years and must be over 60. A decent short brawl. **

4. Soaring Eagle and The Acadian Giant defeated The Cuban Assassin and Goldie Rogers when the Giant pinned Goldie after a decent side slam. Eagle was in for 90% of the match and worked his butt off. Decent. ***½

And that was it. Not a total ripoff but close. I would have been better off and enjoyed myself more if I had stayed home and watched my bootleg SMW tapes. I'm not sorry that I went though.

INTERVIEW WITH PETE LEDERBERG

I had the opportunity to sit down and talk wrestling with Pete Lederberg the other night. Many of you may not know Pete, but he was one of the first of the "hardcores". Pete was affiliated with the old Wrestling Fans International Association, which every year put together a convention in a different city as a way for wrestling fans from around the country to meet and swap war stories (Sort of like what goes on at the P.P.V.'s except since Ron wasn't there no one ever went to a strip bar) Anyway, Pete has been affiliated with the wrestling newsletter industry for the past 15 years or so and we talked about his beginnings as a hardcore, his friendships in the industry, his contribution to a famous wrestling angle and generally about the state of the wrestling business then and today.

Jeff: Let's start at the beginning, Your 31, right?

Pete: Yeah, I was born the son of a sharecropper. Anyway, I started watching wrestling around 1975 when I was in New York and they did the deal where Stan Hansen broke Bruno's neck and Inoki fought Muhammed Ali. I lived on Long Island so WOR was like a local station. So, I would stay up to midnight and watch the WWF show with Chief Jay Strongbow. But around 1976, I moved to South Florida.

Jeff: Had you watched the Florida show on the indy station in N.Y.?

Pete: No not really. But I was really impressed in the difference in Florida & the WWF. Florida was a lot faster paced and the style was more legitimate looking. The quickness of the action too, since N.Y. had all the plodding big guys. When I'd go back to N.Y. on vacation I'd wonder how I'd ever watched the show.

Jeff: So you moved to Florida. When did you start going live?

Pete: Same year, around '76. I started getting magazines like 'Ring Wrestling' and I got a bulletin out of Philly by a guy named Greg Mosorjk. I started writing for him, mainly sending him results. I put an ad in the bulletin for pen pals and was just inundated with response because Florida was such a hot spot. I used to think, since I was from N.Y., that everyone in Florida was illiterate. I guess at the time there were very few people from Florida that corresponded with the bulletins. But I had so many people corresponding with me that I started my own in bulletin in '77 called 'Florida Mat Action'.

Jeff: Was it mainly results, or did you do any inside stuff?

Pete: We stayed away from the kay fabe stuff. As a matter of fact, we went so far as to do an article about how mad we were when Steve Kiern and Mike Graham lost the Florida tag belts one night where Eddie Graham took Steve's place.

Jeff: Was that because you weren't smart?

Pete: No, we were actually more borderline like a 'Wrestling Eye'. But I always had an attitude to protect the business because that's what the boys did. There were always problems with the offices cooperating with the bulletins and I always figured that the more I exposed it, the less cooperation I was gonna get. I mean, the whole idea was to promote wrestling. I just felt if you criticized or knocked wrestling, you weren't helping it. I just tried to keep things positive.

Jeff: Now I know you had a Steve Kiern fan club. How did you start that?

Pete: Well, I was going to the matches a lot, buying pictures and I got involved with the people selling them, a guy named Brian Berkowitz. I'd go to West Palm on Monday, Miami on Wednesday and Ft. Lauderdale on Friday. Well, Brian knew Steve Kiern and I'd always liked his style.

Jeff: Now this was light years away from Skinner.

Pete: And light years away from the Fabs too.

Jeff: So this was the plain old Steve Kiern, the 'son of a Vietnam vet'.

Pete: Yeah, and he was pretty cool, going to the ring stoned and hanging on the ropes with a smile on his face. But I got to Kiern thru Brian. Actually, I asked Mike Graham first, but he gave me sort of a stupid answer.

Jeff: Mike was kind of a ...well...he was sort of a dick.

Pete: I wouldn't argue with that. But anyway, the thing with Kiern started because of my bulletin, which led to affiliation with the WFIA.

Jeff: How long had the WFIA been around?

Pete: It was started in the 60's by a guy named Don Wilson from New Mexico. When it was started it began with the idea of helping to promote wrestling. They had a section in their bulletin called 'Friends of Wrestling', which is pretty much what they wanted to be.

Jeff: They had conventions every year. What was the 1st one you went to?
Pete: 1978. It was in Knoxville.

Jeff: Was that when Bob Roop & Kevin Sullivan were there?

Pete: Yeah and Ronnie Garvin & the Mongolian Stomper. Those two were in the main event on the card I went to in a Russian Chain match. Ronnie bled all over the place. It was great.

Jeff: Now 1978. Who were the big names in wrestling fandom?

Pete: Well, let's see. Mike Gratchner was one. Tom Burke, Diane Devine. I think Brian Hildebrand, who's a referee with Smokey Mountain now. And Eddie Gilbert, Walt Wolansky and Jim Cornette.

Jeff: Were the awards a shoot or did you kind of cooperate with the promotion whose territory you were in?

Pete: Well, I can't speak for everyone, but I think generally speaking, the idea was to give the wrestler and the tag team of the year to someone in the region you were in.

Jeff: So the next convention was in 1979 in Memphis?

Pete: Yeah and that was my first exposure to Memphis wrestling.

Jeff: Back then, before videotapes became popular, people would trade audio tapes wouldn't they?

Pete: Yeah, it wasn't like stereo or anything. You'd just sort of hold your tape recorder up to the t.v. Back then the photo's were a lot more popular. But because of cable t.v. and video, people just don't buy the photos anymore.

Jeff: So 1979 was in Memphis. Was this when you first met Jerry Lawler?

Pete: Lawler and Dundee also. I'm pretty sure met Eddie the year before in Knoxville. The interesting thing is that year I met Terry Justice, who had started a bulletin about Eddie when he was a teenager, before he started wrestling.

Jeff: Was it pretty much a given when Eddie was a kid that he was going into the business?

Pete: Oh yeah, definitely.

Jeff: Now was he similar to Owen Hart. By that I mean that allegedly when Owen was an underaged teenager ~~was one of his father's~~ ~~sons~~, he'd put a hood on and work a match.

Pete: Not that I know of. It's not a knock on Eddie, but I think the training that Owen Hart got was a lot different. Memphis never really put a big emphasis on actually wrestling. They could take someone who was very green and get them over by teaching him to do these crazy brawls. It took me awhile to get used to the difference in Memphis and Florida, even in the announcing with Gordon & my buddy Lance Russell. It was such a big difference. I had gone from the WWF to Florida to Memphis. The WWF, well God knows what they were doing, and Florida was a lot more based on doing what people now call restholds, but was part of their style.

Jeff: Well that was because Eddie Graham was very concerned with appearing legitimate.

Pete: Exactly. But in Memphis, they had more guys like cartoons. They had guys who couldn't wrestle a lick, and Lawler has said that. They never used a lot of armbars or armdrags. I mean, Lawler's big move is a fistdrop for God's sake! It took me awhile to get used to all those brawls, but when I did, I preferred it.

Jeff: Well, why do you think that Memphis could do that, were as Florida did the legitimate looking stuff and WWF was doing almost an ethnic thing?

Pete: It was strictly the way the fans were weaned. I remember watching a WWF match with Jim Cornette and Norm Dooley. It was a Backlund title defense. Well, the finish was that the match was stopped for blood. I don't know if they ever did capsules or what, but there was hardly any blood at all. The three of us agreed that if they ever did that in Memphis, there would've been a riot. Florida too, since Dusty bled every night. I think the other thing is that WWF fans understood that there was a pecking order. You had Backlund, then Strongbow, then maybe an Ivan Putski and so on. The way a heel got over was to beat on of the 2nd tier guys to get a shot at Backlund. Florida was interesting because you had certain guys who were always here, like the Brisco's and Kiern & Graham. Even if they weren't being pushed, they were on the undercard along with guys like Bob Roop & Bob Orton Jr.. So you always had good matches on the undercard. After awhile, they'd get pushed again and get the belts. I guess in a sense they were like Lawler and Dundee in Memphis, except those two were always on top.

Jeff: How is it that Lawler has managed to stay on top so long? I mean, he's been there basically every week for the past 20 years, and he's still a draw.

Pete: Well, I'm not sure he's always been a great draw there. He was a heel there for years, but things didn't really get going until he broke his leg and came back as a babyface. After that they did the bounty of the week guy and brought in some big names. That's about when they did the empty arena thing with Terry. They had done a thing in '77 where he had retired and Jimmy Valiant broke a guitar over his head during a concert.

Pete: He's just got a tremendous mind for the business. I don't think it got repetetive for him until '85. I was talking to him and he had told me about how he was trying to think of something to do. I mentioned to him some things that had worked before and its interesting, not that I'm saying I had anything to do with this, but everything I said, he ending up doing. It was sort of like old Bowdren the Booker coming up with a gimmick for Keichi Yamada. But I said about how when he was injured and come back he always popped a big house for the return and I also brought up him turning heel. I just didn't know if he could do that because of his Sunday morning t.v. show. But he was able to pull it off in 1990 as a heel, and of course they did the injury deal with Tommy Rich and Austin Idol. Jeff: Well he also did the loser leave town deal with Bill Dundee, which started the program with Dundee and Buddy Landel. Pete: Yeah and the thing is I was never sure whether or not he could work around the talk show of his. Jeff: He's pretty unique in a sense, being such a local celebrity. Did he just never want to go national? Pete: Yeah that the deal. He's a real interesting guy and one that I respect a hell of a lot. I mean, every Sunday he still plays softball at his old high school. He's just very locally based. He doesn't really like to travel and really loves the Memphis area. Jeff: You know, I'm trying to think over the last 25 years of anyone in wrestling in a regional area who was that much of a local celebrity. Maybe Verne in Minneapolis or Fritz in Dallas. Pete: Probably the whole Von Erich family in Dallas would be similar. But he's still unique. A lot of people would say that he has a tremendous ego, but I think there's such a thing as earned ego. The guy is a tremendous talent in and out of the ring. He's an artist and he's very funny also, which comes across in his interviews. I don't think he's given enough credit by smart fans for being able to put together an entertaining match. Who cares if he can't wrestle amateur? Flair & Liger can wrestle a green guy and have a good match, but so can Lawler. It's just a good match in a different sense. I think he could get over anywhere in the country with his mouth. Jeff: I'm don't know how many guys can get over just on their mouths. Pete: I'm not sure I agree with that. Jeff: Well, let me rephrase that. There are very few places left where you could get the opportunity to get yourself over with your mouth. Pete: There you go. I'd say Lawler, Cornette & Paul E. could. But getting the opportunity is the thing. I'm not sure there's one set way to do anything in wrestling anymore. There are people that'll tell you that you have to have credible wrestling, or that you have to have credible this or that. I don't think anything is written in stone anymore. Jeff: Okay, getting back to the WFIA, you went to Memphis in '79 and then in '80 you went to Atlanta. Pete: Our convention coincided with the angle where Dusty got attacked in the cage by Ole and the rest of them. Jeff: That was a pretty big deal. I'd say over the last 15 or 20 years, that might have been one of the top 5 angles anywhere. Pete: Yeah, and the funny thing is, I was sitting there with Barry Rose and I said to him before the match, 'Hey, wouldn't it be great if they all jumped Dusty?' Sure enough it happened. Jeff: Was it one of those things where the crowd had no idea it was going to happen? Pete: No, they had no idea. Which makes it better of course. Jeff: The angle always seems to lose something when you know its coming. Pete: Oh yeah. You know, I love the newsletters and stuff, but an angle is always better when you don't know its coming. Jeff: I think that's one thing that made the TBS show more enjoyable in the past, when they'd tape it in the morning and air it in the evening. Pete: That and the fact that in that case it didn't give the newsletters two weeks to bitch and complain about it before it even aired. Jeff: Well, in defense of newsletters, I really don't have a problem with the sheets printing that Barry Windham turned heel at a t.v. taping. But I can understand where people in the business might get upset if I show up at a house show 3 days before the angle airs on t.v. and announces to every person in earshot that Windham is turning heel on t.v. this coming weekend. That ruins it for everyone and I can see the point there. Pete: Another point I'd like to make is that people are losing part of the enjoyment of wrestling when they know what the finish is going to be. I have a problem with someone like Dave Meltzer writing his stuff, because he's been around the business a long time. What bothers me is someone like Wade Keller spouting opinions left, right and center and then disagreeing with himself from week to week. I'm letting my subscription expire. It's just so annoying.

Pete: It's like he encourages these people to whine all the time. I'll tell you another thing. The last big thing I went to was Superbrawl '91 in St. Petersburg. Now I don't care if people know stuff, but when a little bootlicking piece of garbage weasel like Alex Marvez sits there with his little thing in the Miami Herald and is trying to impress me by typing the result of the main event into his little machine before he leaves and he walks away with that cocky walk of his. He hasn't paid his dues and he tries to go around impressing people. Well he doesn't impress me.. That's one of the problems WITH the sheets in that your getting more and more people like that useless slimeball. That's the people that get me mad. And that damn Lemieux, he still hasn't returned the old programs of mine that he still has. Hey! You told me he'd give them back if I did this interview!

Jeff: Well, Ron is certainly known as a man of his word...now, getting back to Atlanta in 1980...something else happened during the convention that kind of made you one of the predecessors of the "Front Row, Section D" guys in Greensboro.

Pete: Well, if people remember, at the beginning of the old TBS show, Freddy Miller used to come out and announce who was going to be on the show that week. You know, he'd go "Tommy Rich", and the fans would yell and cheer and boo when he'd call out the heel names. Well that day he decided to put the mike in front of me and some of my more obnoxious friends. So we booed Mr. Wrestling II and cheered Baron Von Raschke during the intros. Well Freddy just starts busting out laughing and puts the microphone even closer to us. So Mr. Wrestling II comes out and this guy Paul Frank is sitting next to me and he starts yelling "Johnny Walker, Johnny Walker!" Like he was trying to impress someone, making him a possible predecessor to Alex Marvez. But the funny thing is that the rest of us knew it was Johnny Walker, but the rest of the crowd probably had no idea who Johnny Walker was since he hadn't wrestled under that name since God knows when.

Jeff: How did the Atlanta promotion treat you?

Pete: I remember Paul Jones was a hell of a nice guy.

Jeff: Over the next few years, where did the convention take place?

Pete: I know one was in Houston and another was in Indianapolis.

Jeff: Now eventually there was a split in the WFIA.

Pete: Here's what happened. Don Wilson brought the convention back to Memphis in '83. I had missed the '81 & '82 conventions because I was in college. Well, Wilson decided in '83 that he didn't want to run the conventions anymore. So this guy Jim Ross, who's not the same Jim Ross who's an announcer...

Jeff: The occasionally annoying announcer?

Pete: Yeah, except the other Jim Ross was mostly annoying and I hesitate to use the word "geek", because he's the kind of guy who'll spend \$10,000 on a lawyer to get \$5 in court. Which is the truth. Well, he becomes the assistant director in '82 while I'm away and must have pushed his way up because no one really knew the guy. From what I understand part of his appeal was that he could get all the printing done for free. That was his main contribution to wrestling. Anyway, Don Wilson decided to step down. The convention went to Memphis and I won Fan of the Year, which really wasn't a work since I had brought a bunch of people with me, including Howard Baum, which was the first time he was allowed away from home, but Don, as executive director and founder of the WFIA gave me the permission to succeed him, since there was nothing in the by-laws about appointing a new executive director. Don handed it to me. Ross assumed it would be him and copyrighted the name, spent the money on lawyers, bought an ad in an Apter magazine, all that without wanting to run a convention in '84. Basically to me another ego trip, but that's just my opinion. He also sent Jerry Jarrett a threatening letter, about how the WFIA was a copyrighted name and to not use it on t.v., how we were misrepresenting things and so on.

Jeff: So at this point, you and Howard Baum decided to run a convention in Memphis in '84, and you were calling it the WFIA?

Pete: Exactly. So basically all his maneuvering did was two things. We changed our name to Wrestling Fans International, dropping the Association, and it helped screw up the relationship we had with the promotion. Why the guy did all this I don't know. We ran sort of a bare bones group, meaning we didn't make any money, but we weren't spending a lot. My whole idea was to just keep it going so we could go to the conventions to meet with the people. We didn't have P.P.V.'s like we do now, where everyone gets together, or huge conventions like John Arezzi does.

Pete: I think the other people were on an ego trip, but they died after a year or two.

Jeff: Now before we leave Memphis in '84, something else happened that tape collectors know about, involving an angle with Eddie Gilbert & Tommy Rich and the breakup up of their tag team. And you & Howard did the requisite t.v. appearance, complete with your great facial expressions.

Pete: Well, I was pretty much mugging for the camera. Howard kept watching the monitor in the studio to make sure he was on camera. Anyway, I went to Memphis about a week before the convention to do some promo work. So one day I'm sitting on the set of the Jerry Lawler show talking to Eddie, and I mentioned that maybe it'd be good to give him & Tommy Rich the tag team award as a way of heating up their feud, since Eddie was beginning a heel turn. I figured we could pretend like we were from out of town and didn't know about their split. Anyway, Eddie liked it and after talking to Jerry Jarrett they went with the angle where Eddie attacks Tommy during the awards presentation. This was of course after Eddie had apologized to Tommy for breaking up their team. What was interesting was when I went on camera, I didn't know if I should come off as a cocky know-it-all or...

Jeff: You mean like..

Pete: You got it, like Marvez or Keller. But I just gave very basic, straight answers. I found out the night before at a spot show that we'd be doing the angle. It was pretty fun. I certainly don't want to take the full credit for the angle, although Eddie Gilbert gives it to me, but it was fun seeing an idea of yours come to life in front of you. The promotion was very cooperative with us in the first convention, particularly Lawler, Jimmy Hart and ~~Ray~~ Lance Russell. But in the later conventions there were problems.

Jeff: Well I know there were problems in '88 with the convention that Jon Gallagher put together in Memphis. The hardcores went to the Monday night show and sat in the front row chanting "just say no!" to Kevin Von Erich and a lot of the Memphis guys didn't like that.

Pete: We tried to protect the business even then. We were very careful about what we said if someone local from Memphis was in the room. Lance Russell was always giving the famous signal to close the door before he'd cut loose and start talking. Everyone still protected the business to a point. I just feel some people should realize that they hurt themselves when they come off cocky. I think there has to be a little more respect for what they're writing about.

Jeff: What's the biggest difference, other than say, exposure from cable t.v., in the average wrestling fan from '77 to '82 and today?

Pete: I'd say territorial pride. A guy from Chicago would come to the convention and be convinced that the AWA was ~~the~~ big thing and so on. You know, like "mine's the best". And if that AWA fan was to see a tape of that stuff now, like say, the Crusher's bolo punch, they'd probably laugh. Today's fan can't ever seem to be happy. I read in the Torch the other day, and its because of stuff like this that I'm letting my subscription expire...People are asking for something new. WCW brings in this guy Scorpio out of nowhere and now all of a sudden I read, 'Why didn't they build the guy up first?'. There's too many people giving too many opinions. Not everybody's an expert. Hey, everyone's entitled to an opinion! I'm not trying to knock all wrestling fans. I've never seen a group of people who were more honest, which is interesting because if you ever start dealing with wrestlers, like I did with selling my photos, I got messed over on payments by a lot of wrestlers, but never by a fan.

Jeff: I want to talk about something you and I discussed awhile back. I know for me personally, I went thru a phase in the summer of '91 where I got burned out on wrestling and it lasted almost a year. You said something interesting, and I know Dave Meltzer totally disagrees with you, that....

Pete: I think the quote was that the more you get into it, the more you want to get away from it. I mean you just want to get out!

Jeff: My point was that wrestling fans are like the proverbial moth being drawn to the flame. your point is that the closer the moth, or the fan, gets, the more they want to get away. Meltzer's theory is that the moth is compelled to get even closer because basically what they find is so perversely fascinating. Damn this is philosophical! Speaking of weasels, I hope Lemieux appreciates this kind of stuff!

Pete: I just hope I get my damn programs. The bottom line was that the more the fan gets into it, the more they want to get out. Its like being bitten by a bug that keeps coming back.

Jeff: Its sort of like herpes. I understand there are a few wrestlers who can appreciate what that particular bug is like.

Pete: The point is that the closer to it you get, the more slimy things you see. The people in the business will tell you that its a hard business, and it makes you a hard person. You try and get away from the business, but, you always seem to come back. That's as a favor a wrestler.

Jeff: Maybe that's why Ed Farhat is still wrestling when he's 71.

Pete: Exactly. I've gone thru phases where I thought I was out of it, but I slowly get sucked back in.

Jeff: Final question. All those conventions you went too, what was the best match you ever saw live?

Pete: I'd say 1985, the Fabulous Ones vs. the Shepherders, who I think were Boyd & Morgan. Great brawl that went all over the building.

Jeff: I guess that just about does it.

Pete: We're done? One last thing. Tell Ron if I don't get my programs back soon, I'll tell that wife of his about that night in St. Petersburg, remember he went to that club Mons....

(Unfortunately the tape I recorded the interview on ran out at this point and Jeff just couldn't seem to remember what Pete said.....)

MORE ACCUSATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IN WRESTLING

I was sickened by the cowardly, mealy mouthed reporting demonstrated in the recent Fenthouse expose. Am I the only one who has the guts to reveal what is really going on out there? Here's the latest dirt...

1. After catching her boyfriend, Jason Hervey, diddling with Whoopie Goldberg backstage at "Circus of the Stars", a devastated Missy Hyatt immediately fell into the comforting arms of stud boy Charles Nelson Reilly, who in turn shattered the dreams of his own longtime "companion" Merv Griffin.

2. The continuing rumors regarding the Ultimate Warrior and his reputation as Atlanta's number one "Call Boy" turned out to be a misquote. In actuality, he is the number one "Bail Boy" of the Atlanta Braves. Ted Turner was not forthcoming with an explanation as to why he would hire a WWF wrestler for such a prestigious position. Meanwhile, a satisfied looking Jane Fonda just smiled and licked her lips while Turner glared at her.

3. Former WWF ring announcer Mel Phillips, with Gennifer Flowers' attorney in tow, called a press conference to put a squelch on the rumor that he was signed to endorse a line of children's athletic shoes to be known as "Lil' Sniffers".

4. An unidentified WWF wrestler decided that a gimmick change was necessary to end the rumors that he had submitted to the homosexual advances of certain company executives in exchange for a push. In an effort to be perceived as an insatiable rat monger, he now insists upon being referred to as "The Brooklyn Baller".

5. Pat Patterson is not really Gay after all. He was coerced into homosexual activity by a well organized group of underaged ring boys who extorted him with photos depicting Patterson and the Fabulous Moolah playing strip Twister during the reception party after Paul "Butcher" Vachon's wedding several years ago. Knowing that Vince McMahon disapproves of his employees parteceting in heterosexual activities, Patterson did the only thing he could to save face.

6. A frustrated Alexandra York is suing WCW for lack of sexual harassment. "Why can't I be exploited just like Missy and Madusa?" she complained. "I obviously have what it takes to make it in this business and I resent not being given the opportunity to show everybody what that is!"

That's all the people need to know!

BUTCH

Butch Sigelow
Dead Dog, KY

ARENA REPORT READER PROFILE

NAME: Butch Bigelow

OCCUPATION: Former pro wrestler, currently unemployed. Once managed Richard Gere's gerbil ranch in Encino until that tramp Cindy Crawford fired me. Also worked as Freddy Mercury's personal masseur until recently.

BORN: Friday the Thirteenth in suburban Dead Dog, KY.

WHAT THREE WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: Crabby, constipated, troll-like.

DREAM VACATION: 21 consecutive meals of McBorsht at the Moscow McDonalds between KGB interrogations.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: Sarcastic pets, beef stew enemas, inanimate objects, people who don't take questionnaires seriously, wrestling newsletter editors who criticize my personal hero and role model Vince McMahon Jr, ie. everybody except that classy, dignified Vince Russo guy.

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Bread and water with Leona Helmsley. Fricasseed rabbit with that sexy Marilyn "Toots" Rundle babe. But would especially enjoy force feeding pork to Barbra Streisand.

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: The Plasma Sucking Monkeys from Lake Mary.

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: Tiny, hibernating, poisonous toads. My voluminous personal sperm bank. Walt Disney.

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Either Dinty Moore or Maria Ouspenskaya (best known as Maleva, the old gypsy woman from the original Wolfman)

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: The 30 minute Cher Info-tainment show with that hideous, grossly overweight beauty expert. Any show with anybody named Heather.

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: The day I humiliated BT Express in the ring by pinning him in less than 2 minutes, pulling down his tights and spanking him in front of his underaged girlfriend and J.D. McKay's entire family, who laughed and laughed.

BB

A LOOK AT THE TOP FLORIDA INDEPENDANT WRESTLERS
by Ron Lemieux

Florida is known by many as the independant wrestling capital of the country. There are numerous independant promotions throughout the state with more popping up from day to day. Blackjack Mulligan will be starting one running out of the Orlando Sports Stadium (formerly known as the Eddie Granam Sports Complex) on January 16. I was recently asked by Mike Tenay on his "Wrestling Insiders" radio show why Florida is such a haven for pro wrestlers. I couldn't give a good answer. Is it the water they drink? In any case I've put together a list of who I consider to be the top ten wrestlers working for the indy promotions here in Florida.

1. Jimmy Backlund- No one is even close. This guy has more talent than 3/4 of the wrestlers working for Bill Watts. I can't understand how Watts can pick guys out of the state like Tex Slasher and The Terminators but leaves Jimmy Backlund alone. Kevin Sullivan recently told a noted observer than Backlund was better than Bret Hart. It's hard for me to compare the two considering Jimmy has never worked for a big time promotion but he continues to carry his less than talented opponents (on most occasions) to good bouts. Backlund did have a shot with Titan but it ended in disaster. He worked an opening match on a house show here in Orlando against Skinner (Steve Keirn). He had bladed the night before on an indy show and in the bout with Keirn it accidentally opened up. You can imagine the WWF officials reaction to blood in an opening bout. Backlund wasn't used again. Titan's loss. He's currently working for the ICWA out of Tampa as a face but is far better as a heel. He also wours W*ING in Japan and is their lightheavyweight champ.
2. The Superstar (Bob Cook)- One of the more recognizable names on this list. Cook of course jobs in WCW and works security during their Clashes and PPVs. A very good talent who throws one of the best looking punches in the business. Too bad he's jobbed so much for WCW because he too is better than most of the guys Watts has. Works mainly in Florida for Suncoast Pro Wrestling with their main shows at the Manatee Civic Center.
3. Dean Malenko- Of course, the son of the legendary Boris Malenko. Works a tight style which looks very realistic. Has a good rep in Japan. A real good worker but his style doesn't suit the average american fan. Works for both ICWA and Suncoast Pro.
4. Big Till- One half of the Heartbreakers tag team that use to work for the IWF. Is now going solo in IWF under a hood known as Odessa Slim. Does a good looking Dusty act in the ring and at the recent TV tapings was the most over babyface. A big guy who can work rings around guys taht weigh a lot less. Would compare him to Jumbo Berretta and even better than a Bam Bam Bigelow.
5. Mark Starr- Worked in the semi-spotlight im Memphis with brother Chris Champion as "Wildside". A great heel who can get lots of heat with his talk and mannerisma. Currently woks for ICWA and CFWF.
6. Nasty Ned Brady- A tremendous heel who's facials crack me up but send the kids running to their mommy's skirts. Will be famous with hardcores for his match with Raul Mata in Tampa the night before SuperBrawl in 1991 that blew us all away. Was doing the Repo Man gimmick in the IWA before Titan stole the gimmick, gave it to Barry Darsow and trademarked it making IWF officials change his name and gimmick. Everyone will tell you that Ned made that gimmick work great and it didn't look like the cartoon character that Darsow makes it out to be. Currently works as The Possessor in IWF and has curtailed his schedule to weekends due to running his own company.
7. Cuban Assassin (David Sierra)- Never thought much about his work until I saw him work the indies down here. Probably be the same if I saw Buddy Lee Parker being put over on a consistant basis. Good heel who has a valet named Fantasy who adds to the act but not for her actions but her heel look. Cuban just won the ICWA title in a battle royal on 12/17.
8. Kevin Sullivan- The most famous name on the list. I wasn't sure whether to include him since he's such a name but he works more indy dates than some of these regulars. Works for just about any group in the state. Has worked for two promotions in the same day. He beats the hell out of his opponents and if you like brawling you'd probably put him at the top of your list. Has the besy indy brawls in the state.

9. Rob Van Dam- An upcoming superstar who has it all but ring experience. A high flyer who has some tremendous innovative moves. For those who use to trampoline in gymnastics, you'll understand this one. He runs from one corner of the ring to the other, does a seatdrop on the top turnbuckle and backflips onto his prone opponent. Amazing stuff. Has worked for indys in the Carolinas as well. Currently working the IWF and will be going to Japan next month.

10. Billy Brooks- One half of the Bad Boys tag team. Just came back from Puerto Rico wher he and partner Brett Blair were working for the AWF. Looks much like Bobby Jaggers but a better worker. Great on the stick. If he and Brett get a break with one of the big 2, they could go places.

Honorable Mentions: Dynamite Express (Randy Fuller & Randy Rhodes), Long Riders (Kip Winchester & Brett Colt, Tim Parker, Rico Frederico, Brett Blair, Lou Perez,

TOP NEW RUMORS ABOUT SHEET PEOPLE

by Butch Bigelow

Evan Ginzburg's notorious antagonism for the WWF stems from an incident many years ago when he and Mel Phillips were both working in the stockroom at Kinney Shoes. To this day, he can't wear open-toed sandals without feeling self-conscious.

David Skolnick, supposed co-editor of Wrestling Perspective does not really exist. In fact, he was invented by Paul J. MacArthur as a tax dodge. Is there one among you who has actually seen Skolnick? I thought not!

People constantly complain about Klon's typeset, when actually he has the world's neatest handwriting. That's right- it's all long hand!

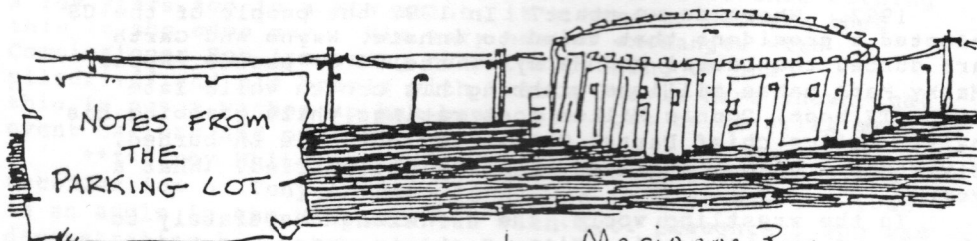
Rodney Leighton of Pugwash, Nova Scotia recently spent several hours in the emergency ward having buckshot dug out of his butt after being mistaken for Bigfoot by a pack of overentusiastic american hunters. They were lured to the spot soon after the discovery of what they thought were "Bigfoot Droppings", although a pantsless Leighton was the only one in the immediate area, unfortunatly for him.

A despondant Jeff Mullins was recently arrested for trespassing after being discovered sleeping in Dave Meltzer's crawl space. He was dirty, dazed and kept mumbling something about how all the Japanese appetizers are gone forever.

Ron Lemieux is in the process of renaming his young son "Rocco" in honor of what he considers to be the greatest wrestling gimmick of the last 10 years.

And now a serious question from the "Butcher"

If Steve Lombardi had repeated sex with Pat Patterson and Terry Garvin for the honor of being pinned every night as the Brooklyn Brawler, please tell me howmuch worse it could have possibly become if he had refused? He could lose every night in WCW without having to be cornholed by anybody (well...except for ne notable exception according to Big Jim Wilson.)



by Marianne Ryan

Do you remember when you were little and Christmas was the most magical time of year? Then you got older and found out the truth. It was hard, you were young and disillusioned. But eventually you grew up. You realized that even if those childhood dreams were just that, Christmas could still be a magical time of year.

It seems the same could be said of wrestling, except that a lot of people haven't gotten to that last stage yet. So much has been written about the sorry state of the wrestling world that it has even been suggested that some people actually enjoy the sheets more than the matches. I can't believe that. They may be harder to find, but there are still a lot of good things to be found in the world of pro wrestling. And some of them even suggest that 1993 will bring changes for the better.

For one, if you overlook the Japanese stars, and ignore things like Doink the clown and the bigger is better poster boys (Typhoon, Earthquake and Yokozuna), the WWF has assembled the very best talent there is. Let's face it, when was the last time you could say every title holder in the WWF can actually wrestle. Not to mention that Bret Hart, Shawn Michaels and Ted DiBiase are consistently ranked as some of the very best technical wrestlers around. Granted, having a clown running around is distracting and childish. But hey, children are the intended target audience.

Over in WCW, when he isn't busy trying to singlehandedly destroy the promotion, Bill Watts has taken advantage of WCW's Japanese ties to showcase more of these tremendous talents that people like myself keep hearing about but never get to see. Unfortunately, every other positive note is countered by something awful, such as the huge shove being given to Eric Watts. If you think about it, Watts has a circus he is trying to run like a wrestling organization, while Vince McMahon has a wrestling organization he runs like a circus. What irony.

My personal highlights: Lex Luger's WCW farwell in February in Milwaukee; Frankie Steiner's first show in March; the Bret Hart-Roddy Piper Wrestlemania match; my June slumber party with Sherri Martel and Mike McGuirk; Marilyn Rundle's summer visit to Chicago; partying at one of Chicago's hot dance clubs with the Nasty Boys in July; the Bret-Davey Boy SummerSlam match; the all you needed to know Jeffrey Dahmer show in Milwaukee, in September; Bret winning the belt (finally) in October; and my three day Wisconsin odyssey with Mike McGuirk 12/14-12/16. It ended with the unofficial WWF Christmas party with Bret, Terry Taylor, Brian Knobbs, Scott Hall, Boss Man, Jim Duggan, Undertaker, Papa Shango, Tatanka, Joey Marella, and Paul Bearer. I needed a week to recover from it.

1992 saw Bret become world champ, Mike McGuirk become the voice of Superstars, Terry Taylor get the announcing job he wanted, and Sherri got some much needed time off. It was a good year. And as it ends, I want to thank the following: Ron for putting AR out, all of the subscribers who pay to read what we have to say, my fellow contributors who make it impossible to rest on your laurels, Steve Taylor (who provided me with my official backstage pass when George Steele and Bobby Heenan tried to throw me out), Bret-for asking what I thought, Brian-for his unknown insight, and for his support in battle, to Terry-a god, someone I love and adore, and whose friendship I treasure, and especially, Mike and Sherri. I cherish their friendship and the good times we've had. I'm looking forward to a lot more. May the holidays be wonderful and 1993 be everything you could ever hope for. Until sometime after I've turned 30 (oh no)...

1992. Where do we start? In 1992 the people of the US elected a president that tried to inhale, Wayne and Garth are dubbed the Laurel and Hardy of the 90's, pseudo rapper Marky Mark makes millions grabbing his crotch while late night TV host, Dennis Miller lost ratings while grabbing his hair. Police chief Darrel Gates fiddled while LA burned, Elvis got a stamp, and Teddy Kennedy got married. What a year...

In the wrestling world, the WWF clung desperately to the rim of the bowl while Billy Graham and David Schultz pulled the chain with their collective might, Hulk Hogan took his first extended leave of absence without making a movie, Ric Flair wins the WWF strap in an hour long marathon against the entire WWF crew, hardcores finally got their wish as Bill Watts got control of WCW and then quickly proceeded to turn off more people than the myriad of bookers and VP's that came before him, WCW traded the Steiners, Lex Luger, and Terry Taylor to the WWF in exchange for burnt-out Jake Roberts and washed-up Greg Valentine. In retrospect, it doesn't appear that 1992 was very kind to the wrestling fan. But then again, there was Smoky Mountain Wrestling.

Imagine a promotion where you could see Jim Cornette do lengthy interviews every week, a mix of Memphis brawls, Mid-South action, and early Dusty-like angles. A wrestling show that starts feuds, has feuds, and finishes feuds. If you haven't had the chance to see it, this was SMW in 1992. For the full story of how this dream-come-true organization got started we have to back to November 1991.

When Jim Cornette turned down offers from WCW and the WWF in the fall of '91 many fans assumed that a great talent had been lost in the wrestling world. Shrouded in secrecy was the coming together of a promotion in east Tennessee, funded by a mystery man, brainchild of Cornette. For reasons only known to Cornette, he managed to keep his idea a secret, taping two shows in November, and then stopped. For months Cornette shopped around for TV stations to carry his show and by late winter 1992 he was on the air. The first show of SMW aired on February 1, '92 and featured a main event with Bobby Fulton against Ivan Koloff. Well maybe not the most awe-inspiring beginning but things got better. A lot better. As the first year comes to a close here is a look at the first year of SMW.

****Strengths- Jim Cornette. Called by many the smartest man in wrestling, Cornette has created a promotion that is the essence of what a promotion should be. It has a central cast of characters that have consistently good matches, mic time for those that excel on interviews, stories that have a beginning, middle, and ending, features TV bouts that are not the typical squash matches, and it has people running it who are dedicated to the business and want to see it persevere. Cornette, who for so long has garnered Manager of the Year honors, is this years number one contender for Promoter of the Year.

**** Bob Caudle and Dutch Mantell. Mantell originally started as a wrestler for SMW but has since turned in his

tights and boots for a headset and mic. Mantell has revitalized the role of the heel commentator surpassing everyone who has tried it since Roddy Piper in Georgia. He has been funny but not obnoxious, witty without overextending himself, and is the perfect compliment for Caudle. Mantell has outdone himself on color commentary this year. Caudle, bland as toast since 1976, added facial expressions to his persona in SMW and is so consistently good at getting angles over and characters established that it is a shame he is only seen in such a small market. During one angle where Kevin Sullivan used Brian Lee's head for a Ginsu demonstration, Caudle sounded like he was going to have a heart attack. Caudle even left the desk to go to the ring to break up the mauling. It was the first time I can recall seeing Caudle involved in an angle. Sullivan was maniacal, Lee bled himself dry, and Mantell and Bob Armstrong cussed on the air, but Bob Caudle was the star of this angle to me.

**** Paul Orndorff. Orndorff was a key character in SMW all year long. Considering how he did less than nothing a few years ago in a WCW stint, it's hard to believe that this is the same guy. His very heated exchanges with Commissioner Bob Armstrong over the banning of the piledriver and his brawls with Ronnie Garvin have shown that this is not a washed up has-been, but that he is still main event calibre and one Hell of a heel.

****Dirty White Boy and manager Ron Wright. My first recollection of Tony Anthony (DWB) was as a jobber involved in an angle in the Mid-Atlantic with Sgt. Slaughter, who was demonstrating his cobra-clutch. The years since have been apparently very educational for DWB as he has become a great heel who gets legitimate heat where ever he goes. His finest moment may have been during an interview with Mantell in a junkyard, DWB's "home." DWB was to face Brian Lee in a match where if DWB lost, he had to leave the area. When Mantell reminded him of the stipulations of the match, as DWB "brushed his teeth," with a swig of beer, DWB responded by looking around the dilapidated cars and buses and stated, "If I lose I have to leave all this?!" Ron Wright, a legend in the Tenn. area was Louting manager of the year honors in May from many fans but has not been used as much in the second half of the year. When he is on camera he is a gem to listen to, but his gimmick of being the wheelchair bound manager limits his antics at ringside. Stay tuned for the day he eventually pops up out of that chair, it will be a collector's item on tape for sure.

****Heavenly Bodies vs. Rock and Roll Express. With the exception of Tom Pritchard, this feud is something that everyone has seen before, and though I have questioned milking this feud, it has been the focal point of the promotion. It wouldn't be fair to acknowledge those who have made this promotion special without mentioning these four. The teamwork that made the Midnight Express so good is not as apparent between Pritchard and Stan Lane, but they do have a couple of nice moves and there is no one in this country who sells any better than Ricky Morton. It remains to be seen how long this feud can carry this promotion, but for now it gets the biggest reaction out of the fans night

after night. Give Cornette credit for giving equal time to Lane and Pritchard on the mic. These two have great raps and Cornette gives them time to shine.

**** Again Jim Cornette. Cornette as a promoter is great. As a performer he rewrote the book this year on being a manager. Those who mentioned Ron Wright as manager of the year must be taking Cornette for granted. This year was like watching a best of Cornette video. Everything you've ever wanted to see him do, he did. This annual would be doubled if some of his best interviews could see print. To sum up the tremendous year Cornette has had, I offer this, a quote from Jim himself in early Nov. '92, "Make sure you watch this weekend. I gave myself six minutes and I think it's the best interview I've done yet." I watched that weekend, and it was as captivating an interview as he promised topped off by Cornette, promising the total annihilation of the R-n-R, ranting and raving so much that he busted a vessel and his nose started bleeding. That folks, is an interview.

Wrestling pessimists will tell you that this promotion can't survive. They will say he's hot shotting to get the area going when it just won't go. One even made mention to me that this promotion would wind up being nothing more than a years worth of good tapes. I hope not. For those who have seen it, SMW has reenergized a lot of fans, myself included. Jim Cornette has created a wrestling fantasy land in the Smoky Mountains and is showing no signs of drying up. House show attendance is up, the crowd is still fluctuating but for the most part is fairly stable and the faces are starting to get over. As long as the backing finances remain available SMW's second year should be the most successful, per-capita, of any promotion in the states. Keep your fingers crossed and your VCR's programmed.

RAMBLINGS

This "Ramblings" will be a little different than the usual ones that run in the regular issue. Since it'll be about five days to get this yearbook printed, any news I put in now will be old hat. And you know how I hate repeating news that every other sheet has already covered. So this will mainly be commentary on a few recent newsmakers along with some Florida news.....This Nailz-McMahon incident is a joke. How anyone could think Vince would be stupid enough to "sexually harrass" one of the guys at this point with the investigation going on is beyond me. Nailz is just going for some easy cash. There's more scum in this business than you can imagine and Nailz is just another example.....I don;t know how many of you heard the WCW 900 line last Tuesday with Steve Beverly talking to Bill Watts about Pro Wrestling Torch Weekly columnist Mark Madden and his recent column about Erik Watts but I've got to tell you. No matter what the case, why does Watts always have to defend his son's position in WCW by saying he was a great college football quarterback? First of all, he wasn't a great .. quarterback. Second, what does that have to do with wrestling. Barry Bonds is a great athlete. Hey, let's make him a pro wrestler. Or how about Steffi Graf? The man is losing it.....Thanks to Mike Lano for this quote from Matt Borne from his 12/2 appearance on the "Canvas Cavity" talk show: "The name Doink came from a list of clown names Titan sent me to pick from. It doesn't mean anything and was funny, so I just picked it. Wait until January, they're going to do a major angle with my character and lots of heavy marketing. I'm not insulted, I'm ecstatic! Beats WCW! I always defended Bill Watts against his critics until this last stint with him- he's really changed and doesn't respect the boys now, treats them like shit." Speaking of Doink, can oyu believe he's booked against Bret Hart for title shots in February? And we thought Vince was changing his ways. Yeah, sure..... Mike Mooneyham, wrestling writer for The Post & Courier recently had an article talking about Kathy Lee Gifford's new book. He tells about a chapter in the book that covers the wrestlers appearances on the "Regis and Kathie Lee Show". Apparently, Gifford was really pissed about Rick Rude's stint on the show. I quote from Mooneyham's article, "The guy comes out in his "Simply Ravishing" robe, kisses my hand ever so gently, and sits there giving me the eye like he'd been behind bars for a decade." She goes on to say that Rude chased her around the studio and she dahed off the set "amazed that I didn't wipe out and hurt myself". Frank Gifford apparently told producer Michael Gelman that if it ever happens again, Kathie Lee will never be on the show again.....At the WCW afternoon show in Ft. Myers on 12/26, Sting was a no-show. He was at a gym working out with Dean Malenko and Jushin Liger. When asked why he wasn't at the show, Sting replied that he was already 6 dates over his scheduled appearances for the year. A company man that Sting.....Also in Ft. Myers, a fan tried to stop Van Vader from using a chair. Vader gave the guy a two handed shove to the chest that sent the fan flying. Wonder if that's the last we'll hear of that. Most likely not.....Rumor has it that three Florida indys are talking about merging. Henry Raines' Suncoast Pro Wrestling already has shows skedded in the ICWA's Sportatorium.....Howard Finkel will be off WWF Superstars and be replaced by Mike McGuirk. Finkel will still do MSG and PPV's. Finkel will be taking on a bigger workload in the office..... Word is that Titan will start taping the MSG shows once again. Hope it's in time to catch that Doink-Bret Hart bout. Should be a keeper.....Well, I'm about to burn another bridge here in Florida but here goes. The live report from Tony Aragona in this yearbook was a show I announced at. I have to tell you that it was the most unorganized show I've ever seen. I thought the fans were going to lynch me. The national anthem started at 8:15. They had me interview all the wrestlers before the matches started. That lasted until 9:00. Then when I finally get in the ring to announce the first match, an official comes to tell me they have three more guys to interview. So this 7 bout card gets over at 11:25. To top it off, the heels won just about every match. And three of the 7 bouts ends with the same finish. Heel wins with brass knucks. Can you say "Worst Booker Of The Year"? And Ron, can you say "You'll never announce for this group again." And to that I say, "Will I ever learn?".....Blackjack Mulligan has taken a lease out on the old Eddie Graham Sports Complex. On the weekend of 1/15 he'll be running three different events: a karate show, a wrestling show, and an American Gladiators type event with two frats from a local college going against each other. Sounds interesting. Chris Qualmann and myself may be doing the announcing, answering my question, no I guess I'll never learn. Hope to see all of you who don't regularly get "AR" next time out. Take care and HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

Ron

READERS' FAVORITE LIVE MATCH OF 1992

TIM WHITEHEAD Two matches stand out as the best live bouts I saw in 1992. I'm tempted to say it was the Heavenly Bodies vs. Fantastics barbed wire cage match at the "Fire On The Mountain" card in Johnson City, TN on August 8th. The fan heat, including the colas assault on Jim Cornette and the Bodies, caused a lot of us to give the match ***** at the time. But in terms of match quality the best was the Heavenly Bodies vs. Rock & Roll Express street fight on Nov. 28th, also in Johnson City. It was simply an all-out brawl with chairs, tables, ceiling tiles, garbage cans, garbage can lids, garbage bags, sticks, boards, and anything else not nailed down. Cornette was in top form and he took bumps like a pro. Oh yeah, and there was lots of juice. The Bodies emerged victorious when Tom Prichard loaded his boot and kicked Robert Gibson in the head, enabling the Bodies to regain the SMW tag belts. Great heat, great match, great promotion!

TERRY BAKER My favorite live match is pretty easy as we've only had two wrestling cards here all year. Thursday May 7 at Century II Convention Center. Ricky Steamboat vs. Steve Austin. with Paul E. at ringside. Great almost non-stop action, few rest holds, Paul getting involved, and just great effort from all three. Ricky won with a sunset flip in the corner that no one saw coming. This match and seeing Muto in person made the night for me.

STEVE YOHE Pilota Suicida vs. Lover Boy 11/14/92 Cal State LA Two out of three falls that seemed to last over 45 minutes. I was disappointed in the reviews given it in the Observer and Lucha Libre Weekly. It seemed four stars to me and it's the only match I've seen with that rating this year. In the third fall, after a brawl which the heel ref was removed, Lover Boy was sitting on the top rope and Pilota Suicida did a version of a frankensteiner but he did a handstand on the second rope and put Lover Boy in a headscissors and threw him across the ring. Two minutes later he tried the same move but Lover Boy reversed it into a powerbomb off the top rope for the pin. I thought it was great. The Cal State cards are the only optimistic thing I've seen in wrestling in over two years.

JEFF COHEN I've gone to several of the now defunct WCW cards at the NJ Meadowlands, but none was as highly anticipated as the December 1991 show. The main event looked okay on paper, with champion Lex Luger taking on Rick Steiner. On the undercard, U.S. champ Rick Rude was fighting Sting, whom he had just dethroned a little over a month earlier. TV champ Steve Austin would battle Scott Steiner, and tag champions Ricky Steamboat and Dustin Rhodes met Bobby Eaton and Arn Anderson, managed by Paul E. Dangerously. Was it that long ago when a line-up like that was put together? Oh, to top it off, Brian Pillman was fighting Jushin Liger. The thought of seeing Liger live was thrilling. Against Pillman, it could be incredible. In fact, the crowd popped big when announcer Gary Cappetta reported that Liger had won the lightweight title at the Omni a few nights earlier. Both men got a nice reaction, considering the amount of hardcore fans present in the building. Neither man disappointed, and the 15 minute contest, with Liger pinning Pillman and the two embracing after, was greeted by a standing ovation. There were two matches left on the card, and although the tag match was three stars with exciting action, it paled next to the high impact wrestling of Liger and Pillman. Since that time, Pillman has been placed in ineffective feuds with Scotty Flamingo, Brad Armstrong, and Shane Douglas. None had an ending, although Douglas pinning Pillman at STARCADE may change that. Liger came back, but WCW didn't have a convincing challenger set up for him. Chris Benoit has yet to be brought in, and Brad Armstrong is back to jobbing. For a short time, however, these two men provided a lot of exciting action in a few arenas, and I was privileged to see them go.

DANNY PARRIS Chris Landell (Chris Hamrick) vs. Jeff Hamrick 9/11/92 Granite Falls, NC It was on a Fantasy Pro Wrestling card. The bout was full of highspots, great wrestling and fairly good brawling. So, many great moves and countermoves. I gave this *****. Definately an unforgettable match. On 10/10 I saw another ***** bout as Jay Eagle & Cherokee Renegade beat Chris & Jeff Hamrick.

ANDY KING My favorite match of the past year? NO CONTEST: Bunkhouse tag team match pitting Barry Windham and Junkyard Dog against Larry Zbyszko and "Stunning" Steve Austin on 3/31 at the Meadowlands. This was originally supposed to be a Lights Out/Over the Top Cage bout with Dustin Rhodes as Windham's partner, but on this night he was announced

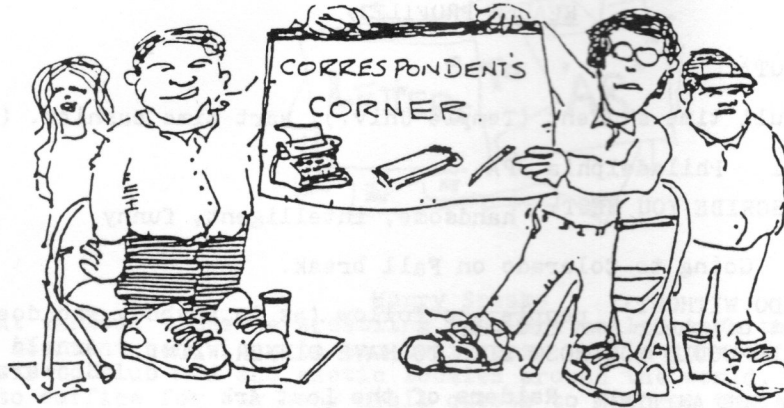
as injured, and was replaced by a mystery partner who was JYD. I can't remember the excuse for the cage's no-show, but no one missed it. This was a classic street fight brawl from start to finish and then some with everything but the kitchen sink and Gary Cappetta being used as weapons. Tables, chairs, boards, an orange, a garbage bag, powder, and a fire extinguisher (the pressurized water variety) found their way into the ring. After Windham and the Dog were declared winners, they even proceeded to take out the trash, depositing Larry and Steve in a trash cart of some sort, and wheeling them out of the arena. Place was going berserk the whole time.

The other reason this whole card was one of the best is that it seems to have marked the end of an era for me. Not only because WCW is no more in this area, but because this was the last show I was at where I was in the company of true wrestling fans. Every live event I've been at since then, I have had the "pleasure" of being seated in the immediate vicinity of a bunch of young kids who appeared to be seeing their very first live matches. I mean, these are the perfect WWF fans, exactly who Vince likes. Young kids watch it, and want to go, but they need their parents to take them, and in every one of these situations I observed, the parents didn't have a clue.

TOP TEN COMEDIANS WHO SHOULD JOIN THE WWF

by Butch Bigelow

1. Howie Mandel aka the Masked Clown Boy - Befuddles opponents by making funny faces and silly noises, then finishes them off by suffocating them with a rubber glove over the snout. Feud with the Undertaker: Rubber Glove vs Chokehold.
2. Gallagher aka Sledge-o-Matic - Treats opponents the same way he treats watermelons. His popularity with the kids increases proportionally with the ever expanding diameter of his prop sledgehammers. Feud with the Mountie: Sledger vs Shocker.
3. Dennis Miller aka Mr. Wise Guy - could become a monstrously obnoxious heel manager simply by remaining the same smug, uptown, pseudo-hip, post modern, chi chi "Mr. In-Joke" that he is already.
4. Roseanne and Tom Arnold aka the Bulbous Ones - A far more evil smelling tag team than the Bushwackers and the Nasty Boys combined. Finishing move has something to do with Roseanne's legendary digestive problems. Feud with the Natural Disasters in special reinforced ring matches.
5. Andrew Dice Clay - Brought in to bolster the WWF's reputation for wholesome family entertainment. In his first interview, he suggests that Mean Gene do something to himself that is biologically impossible for all except the most limber and amply endowed of physical specimens. Mean Gene replies: "You've got to be kidding me!" Feud with Bob Backlund.
6. Super Dave Osbourne - Already has the phony, overblown WWF announcer rhetoric down pat. Every wrestler would be an "Absolutely Sensational Superstar". If teamed with Shawn Mooney, the term "wrestler" would never be uttered again.
7. Sandra Bernhard aka Micki Jagger the Chick Magnet - In an attempt to turn Sensational Sherri face, McMahon recruits the only woman in show business more butch than she is. Snocks her opponents into submission with a huge, deadly looking vibrator ala the Mountie.
8. Whoopie Goldberg aka Madame Hydra - Uses those hideous dreadlocks to ensnare her opponents in a suffocating web of spit ends. Teams with Papa Shango in squash matches against new jobber tag team John Paul and Theresa - the Martyrs.
9. Martin Mull aka the Dorky White Guy - Enters the ring attired in Hawaiian shirt, Bermuda shorts, black socks and sandals. Obviously not on steroids. Defeats opponents by rubbing bologna and Velveeta sandwiches in their faces. Sometimes tags with Rodney Dangerfield.
10. Jerry Brown aka the Spaceman - not technically a comedian, but widely considered to be hilarious anyway. His patented flying moves are not so much "off the top rope" as they are "off the wall".



Our Lady of Guadalupe High School (UWS)
Correspondent: John Davis

New York

December 4, 1992

1) S.D. Jones pinned Bulldog Max in 10:40. Nothing special. * 2) "The Man From Japan" pinned Chris Michaels in 1:05. Man From Japan was Hercules under a hood. Dud 3) Greg Valentine and Boss Hog Calhoun went to a double DQ at 11:36. *** 4) Butch Cassidy pinned Little Ninja in 7:05. Lots of comedy. ** 5) Demolition Ax & Blaster over Kodiak Bear & Dan E. Styles in 10:40. Ax did all the work. * 6) Giant Tiger beat Hercules in 3:58. 1/2* 7) Jimmy Snuka & Timmy Cherro beat Don Muraco & Warlord in a two out of three fall bout. Fall 1 saw Snuka pin Warlord in 6:39. Fall 2 had Cherro pin Muraco in 1:40. *** ATT: 500

Greensboro Coliseum (WCW)

Greensboro, NC

December 13, 1992

Correspondent: Mike Gunter

1) Brad Armstrong pinned Mike Graham. 2) Z Man & Johnny Gunn over Tex Slashing & Shanghai Pierce when Gunn pinned Slashing. 3) Steve Austin and Erik Watts went to a time limit draw. 4) Johnny B. Badd knocked out Scotty Flamingo in the third round. 5) Too Cold Scorpio pinned Brian Pillman. 6) Barry Windham and Dustin Rhodes went to a double DQ. 7) Ron Simmons & Ricky Steamboat beat Van Vader & Dan Spivey. ATT: 1350

Tampa Sportatorium (ICWA)

Tampa, FL

December 17, 1992

Correspondent: Paul Spiegel

1) Big Jim Magnum beat Confusion. 2) Allison Royal drew Molly McShane. 3) Southern Posse went to a no contest in a bull rope match with Lone Riders. 4) Jimmy Backlund over Rico Frederico. 5) Lou Perez downed Mark Starr in a Texas Death Match. 6) Cuban Assassin won a battle royal to become the new ICWA champion.

Union YMCA (USWF)

Union, SC

December 19, 1992

Correspondent: Danny Parris

1) Johnny B. Goode beat Masked Demon in 5:39. Dud 2) Shari Taylor and San Antonio Rose went to a double count out in 5:28. 1/2* 3) Emilio Ulacia & Funktown Kid beat Beastmaster (Rick Link) & LA Stephans in 17:12. -** 4) JW & SW Steele beat Hells Angel Cruiser & Hal Hooper in 19:06. * 5) Jimmy Valiant beat Chris Landell in 8:40 via DQ. * 6) Emilio Ulacia won an 11 man battle royal in 6:07. 1/2* ATT: 75

A Lost Top Ten List

by Ken Knicely

Top ten jobs for Pat Patterson, Terry Garvin, and Mel Phillips When They Got Canned From Titan Sports:

10. Shoe Salesman
9. Quality Control Specialists at Dr. Scholl plant.
8. Inspectors #12, 13, and 14 at Hanes Underwear Factory.
7. Enforcement Officers for the EEOC
6. Cabinet members for President Perot.
5. Podiatrists
4. Babysitters for Jubie Jay Mullins
3. Teachers at Lucretia Mott Elementary School
2. Counselors at Covenant House
1. Owners of the New GWF

READER PROFILES

NAME: JAMES TOTA

OCCUPATION: full time student (Temple Univ.) Part time cashier. (Super Fresh)

BORN: 10/23/71 Philadelphia, PA

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: handsome, intelligent, funny

DREAM VACATION: Going to Colorado on Fall break.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: people who follow (as in anybody who doesn't dance to the beat of their own drummer)

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Arnold Schwarzenegger

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Raiders of the Lost Ark

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: iced tea, diet soda, peanut butter

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Robert Downey, Jr.

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: Great Sports Debate

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: Since I live in Philly, any moment at a Joel Goodheart show.

NAME: ANDREW CAESAR

OCCUPATION: journeyman electrician

BORN: 2/17/52 New York, NY

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: recovering drug addict

DREAM VACATION: pearl diving in Australia

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: human ignorance and bigotry

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: my wife ALONE!

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Three Feathers

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: ice cream, seltzer, mayo

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Chevy Chase

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: China Beach

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: Savage vs. Steamboat Wrestlemania III. I was in MSG watching it on large screen. The noise of a packed Garden and packed Silverdome combined was awesome.

NAME: GREG YARMAN

OCCUPATION: golf course management

BORN: 7/12/66 Wooster, OH

WHAT 3 WORDS DESCRIBE YOU BEST: I never quit.

DREAM VACATION: Wrestling vacation in Tokyo, Japan with Alexandra York.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WITHOUT: Money, so far I'm a college student. (RL- Not anymore he's not)

WHOM IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH: Alexandra York

MOVIE YOU COULD SEE ANYTIME: Caddyshack

3 THINGS THAT CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR: diet coke, peanut butter, jelly

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE: Ed O'Neil (AL Bundy)

WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU NEVER MISS: Married With Children

FAVORITE WRESTLING MOMENT: Watching Mitsuhara Misawa beat Jumbo Tsuruta on tape from Tokyo in 1990, and looking into the crowd afterwards and seeing people crying.



Harry Speaks

At various times we wrestling fans are called upon to justify our seemingly aberrant behaviour to non-believers. While some of our school friends trek off to Club Med and exotic locales around the world, few explanations seem to suffice for our holy grail quests to witness the elusive six star wrestling match.

Our rationales for legitimizing wrestling were dealt a minor setback when the National Sports Daily folded and took Dave's column with it. My explanation (that strip clubs include wrestling tickets when they offer a discount with a ticket stub from a sporting event does not carry enough weight to really be convincing to non-fans.

Who is more convincing and whose profession carries more weight and influence than people in the medical profession. For instance, how about the "I'm not a doctor but I play one on TV." advertising spokesman?

So going with the trend, I've decided to quote members of the esteemed medical field. For instance, Dr. Barney Cosneck has been quoted as saying, "There would be fewer nervous breakdowns if everyone went to wrestling matches." Using a little selective judgement I don't mention the fact that this statement was made in 1948. Cosneck goes on to say "one can yell out of his system all the aggravations and dissatisfactions that have been accumulating for a long time". "He can blow his top healthily and get rid of all that nervous tensions that must have an outlet." Dr. Cosneck notes that when a lot of nervous force is bottled up with no avenue of escape something usually happens which is not in the best interest of the individual. Do you get the impression that if maybe some of those guys who climbed towers with rifles and shot innocent people should have gone to wrestling matches instead? Dr. Cosner also mentions the change in beautifully groomed dignified women while at the matches. (if he thinks they go wild at the matches he should study the behaviour of those women at the hotel after the matches.)

Another clip from a program in 1947 was headlined "Don't see a doctor! See a wrestling match!" At a recent conference of psychiatrists the question of pent up emotions was discussed. An interesting suggestion was submitted by a brilliant Cincinnati physician and he went on to explain what we all know about wrestling that the non-believers do not know or seem to care about.

Harry White
St. Louis, MO

Shootkick To Sullivan

I got my cap about a month ago and have been booked solid for dates because of it. I guess I'm the benefactor of your legend with the young ladies.

I wonder why Jeff Bowdren hasn't given a shootkick to Kevin Sullivan lately. Two things make him a perfect candidate. 1) Kicking Brian Lee's hand while he was blading. 2) His abuse of jobbers.

The blade incident, like a lot of things he is involved in, was totally uncalled for and dangerous to his opponent. The slugging around of the prelims is pure bush league. The attempt at realism is appreciated but to quote Luna Vachon, "really handing it off to the jobbers" is totally out of place to those on the low end of the pay totem pole. Like one wrestler once said to me after a WWF show, "I don't get paid enough for this shit." Lighten up Kev.

Wade Ratliff
Blanchard, OK

Bowdren

Congratulations to Jeff Bowdren for being publicly blasted by Bill Watts. I can think of no greater compliment in the sheetworld at this time. It's unfortunate that Watts didn't live up to his superhuman image. If you think about it though, wouldn't Dusty Rhodes have the same image if he had suddenly left the business when the Horsemen were at their peak? Could it be that while Watts is in as a cost cutter, that in terms of running a creative promotion, he was a one hit wonder? When I first heard that Watts was on his way in, I expected that we'd all be voting for WCW in virtually every category the year end awards. Instead, they are only the front-runners in the categories that begin with "Worst".

Randy Ray
Benton, AR

Lawler

How did McMahon pull off this Lawler deal without any of the sheets catching on ahead of time? After all his years of bad mouthing the WWF, what's in it for Lawler?

Vic Stanley
Lafayette, IN

RL- Lots of money, that's what. I believe the agreement is something like working (wrestling) seven dates for the year for a six figure number. Dave Meltzer had actually known of the deal ahead of time but didn't know that he would show up on Prime Time. It absolutely floored me. I love that feeling of being surprised once in a while.

Body Language?

Being a confirmed bachelor (one who still enjoys picking up on the kind of Madusa-like babes who flock around Rick Rude), I walked into a crowded bank the other day, lifted my shirt, did a few pelvic thrusts, and promptly got the crap kicked outta me by a bevy of unimpressed female customers. Was it something I said? Or do some women simply dislike a lotta curly hair on a guy's abs?

Riki-Jack Hammeroyd
Sushiland, CA

Funniest Moment Of '92

Since I didn't have a favorite "best" live match of 1992, I want to tell you about the funniest moment of 1992. It happens during any Tex Sallenger/Shanghi Pierce tag team match, but especially memorable is the 12/14/92 TV taping with Tex/Shanghai vs. Diamond Dallas Page & Vinnie Vegas. Whenever Tex gets in the ring the Atlanta Boys (Steve Prazak, Scott Hudson, Gary Lynch, Lenis Sargent, Lou Ludinski, Steve Cohen, John Horton, and myself) give him a big pop. Yelling oohh when he delivers a blow no matter how bad. Booing when he tags out and cheering again when he tags in. On 12/14 we held up a huge T-E-X sign that will show up on TV very well (watch for it on the 1/9/93 show). Overall I can't explain how much fun this is to do so the next Tex/Shanghai match at Center Stage, listen for the Atlanta Boys having fun.

Greg Yarman
Riverdale, GA

This & That

"The most shocking personality change of 19__ occurred to Cowboy Bill Watts, always considered one of Americas most popular and successful stars". That sentence was written by Ron Dobratz and was printed in the 1973 Record Book/Photo Album. Of course, he was talking about 1973. I wonder if Ron is prescient?

It occurs to me that fans should perhaps be offering young Erik Watts their pity as opposed to ridicule and vilification. If anyone would take an honest look at Bill Watts, he has always had to be the top face in whatever organization he was involved with. Hell, in Mid South he was, as far as most fans knew, only the color commentator. Was he not the most popular face in the promotion? Is it possible that Bill does realize that the executive producer of a company can't be jumping in the ring and beating up on the bad guys and thus can't be top face. Therefore, he uses his son as a surrogate.

I have never seen young Watts in the ring....don't have any free WCW TV and have lost all my sources of free tapes and am not about to pay for the crap WCW puts on. I can not comment on his abilities. I do think it's entirely possible that he is being pushed far beyond his own desires. So that, soon Bill Watts can have a belt and feel like he is the most over face in the promotion. Maybe Erik is the Chris Von Erich of the 90's?

My personal opinion is that the rumors of Cornette taking over the WCW booking are crap. Simply because Corny is no fool. In order to succeed, he would have to completely change Watts. For one thing, since Corny is well known for pushing "his" boys, Bobby Eaton would have to get a belt of some sort in short order. And, as sad as it is, Watts and Rhodes have ruined Eaton. Best thing for him is to go to SMW. But the only hope for WCW is to clean out the entire front office and hire some person from outside the business, with bright ideas and a novel approach, like Bowdren or John Muse, seriously.

Thinking about Steve Yohe's letter...I wonder if a bunch of disgruntled former employees of AJW started leveling accusations of sex discrimination, the encouragement of the use of some drug to enhance speed and endurance and various other distasteful practices, if the Japanese press and Dave Meltzer would spend pages of print examining that promotion. Even to the point of suggesting they should go out of business? Relly, that's all there was that started the Titan flap, right?

Rodney Leighton
Pugwash, Nova Scotia